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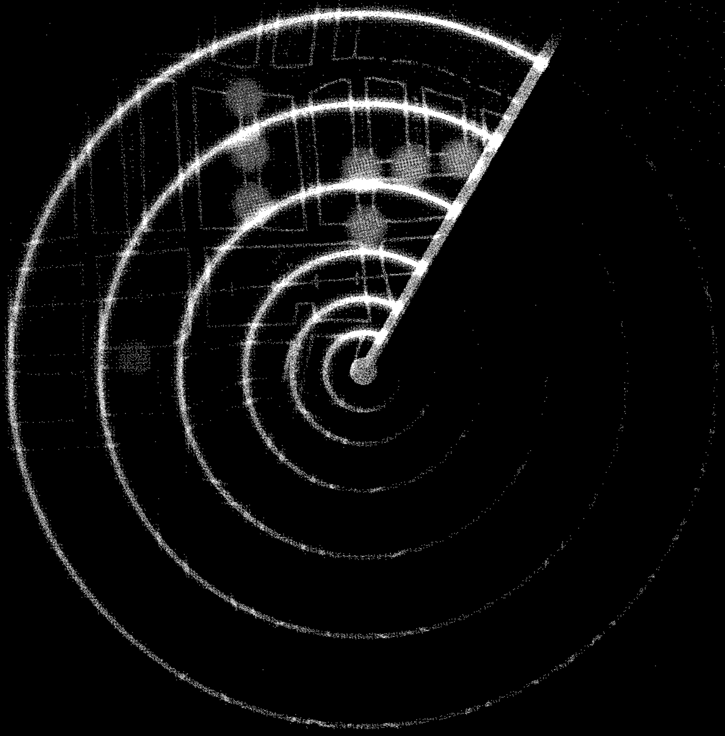

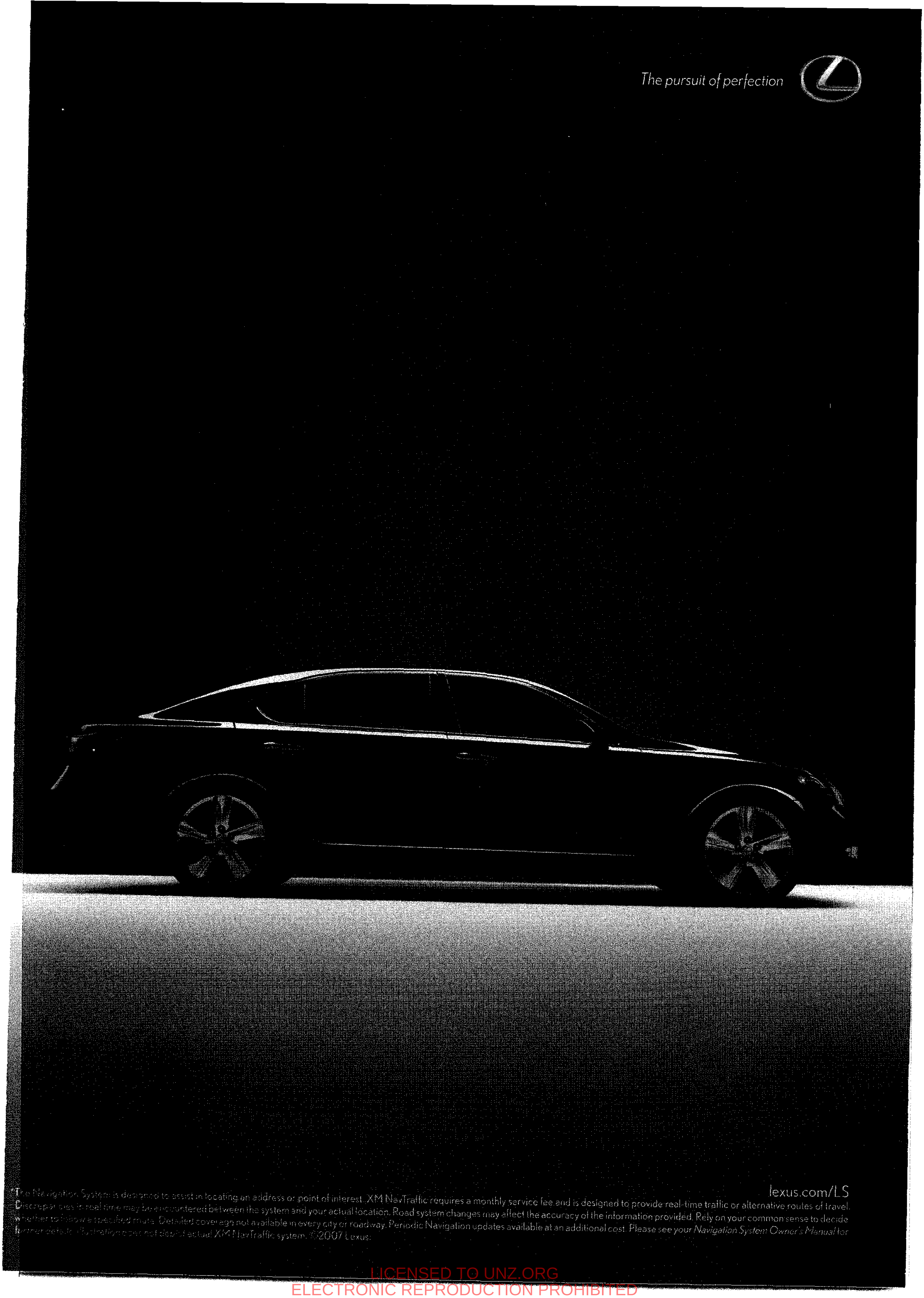

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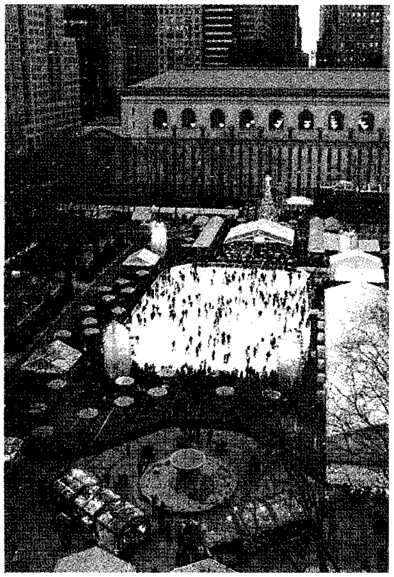

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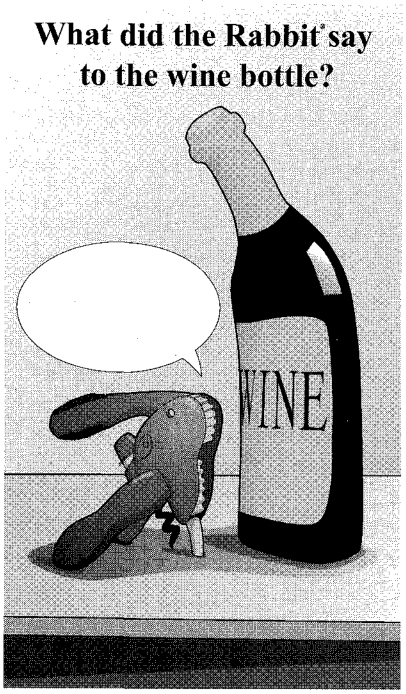
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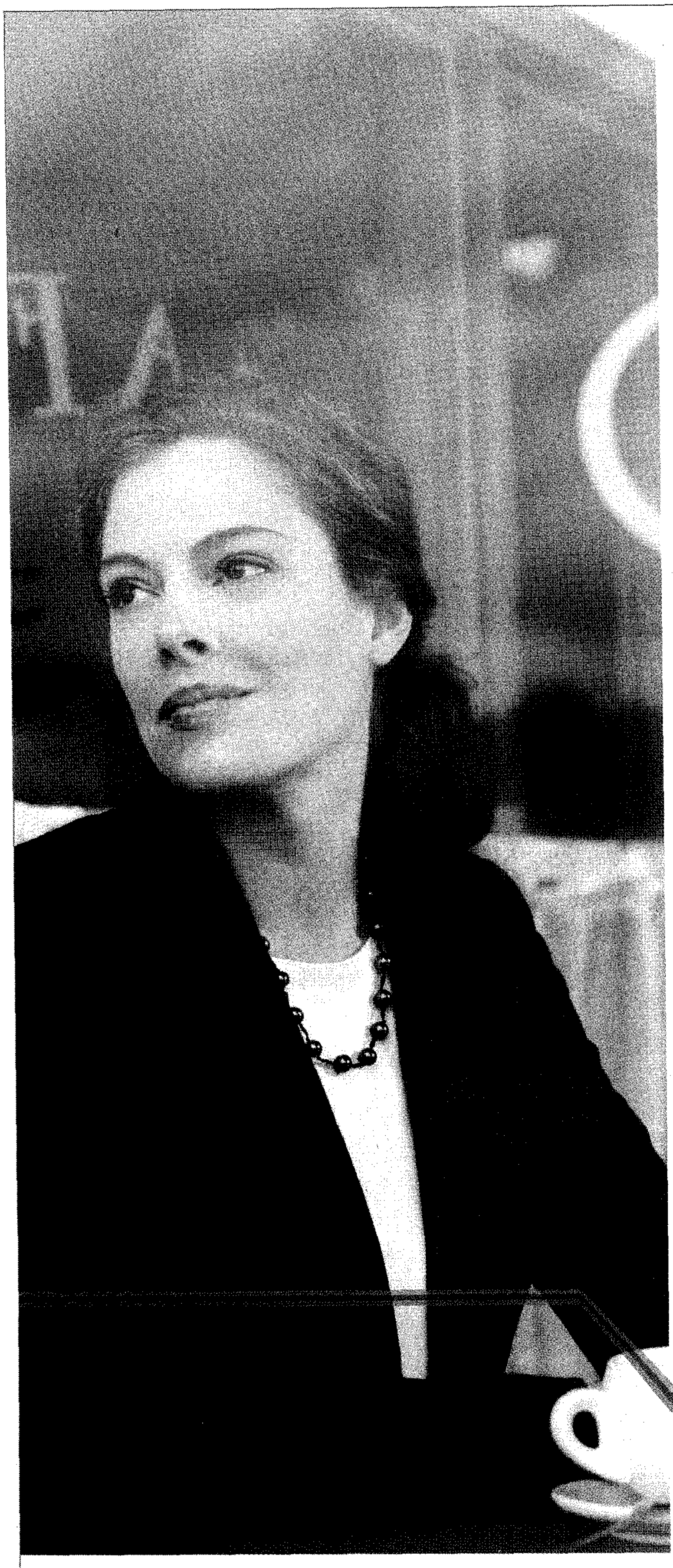
Joan Acocella (Dancing, p. 96) reviews books and dance for the magazine. Her most recent book, "Twenty-eight Artists and Two Saints," is a collection of essays.

Alex Ross (Musical Events, p. 98) is the author of "The Rest Is Noise: Listening to the Twentieth Century," which has just been published.

THIS WEEK ON NEWYORKER.COM

Footage of Paul Watson's band of ecological vigilantes in action, and an interview with *Raffi Khatchadourian.* / An expanded "Hansel and Gretel" Portfolio, including a retelling of the fairy tale by *Roz Chast.* / The art of Frida Kahlo. / *Anthony Grafton's* tour of digital collections. / *Dana Goodyear's* Postcard from Los Angeles, plus blogs by *Hendrik Hertzberg, George Packer,* and *Sasha Frere-Jones.* / From the archives: *John McPhee* explains wildfires, *Geoffrey T. Hellman* meets Frida Kahlo, and thousands of book reviews. / Animated cartoons, the caption contest, and a list of *New Yorker* events.



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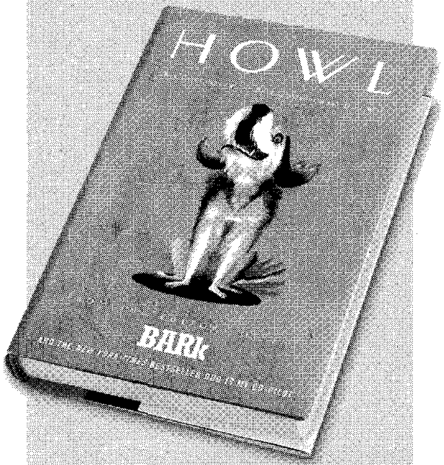

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CROWN

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PARADISE LOST?

As a geographer who teaches about cartographic representation, I was struck by the images, both in print and on the Web, that were chosen to accompany Nick Paumgarten's piece about the landscape ecologist Eric Sanderson's project to map Manhattan as Henry Hudson would have encountered it in 1609 ("The Mannahatta Project," October 1st). The digitally created images that were featured portray a land untouched by human occupancy, a notion that is further emphasized in one case by juxtaposition with a photograph of present-day skyscrapers. Manhattan was an inhabited island when Europeans arrived, which Paumgarten acknowledges, and which Sanderson's project takes into account; yet the images show a land that is utterly empty, effectively erasing the presence of native people. In doing so, they recall early European representations of the New World as "virgin land" open for colonization and exploitation. However unintentionally, such images obscure the actual history of European contact with the New World.

Rich Heyman
Department of Geography and the Environment
University of Texas at Austin
Austin, Texas

Eric Sanderson's Mannahatta Project should encourage us to see the city not with nostalgia for an island we never knew but with new attention to its contours, both concrete and historical. So it was disappointing to see the island's current state referred to as "degraded." In the context of a tale of New York as a lost paradise, even a phrase as neutral as "irrevocably altered" rings unfairly of indictment. If today we were set the task of turning Mannahatta into Manhattan, we would surely keep Minetta Brook in daylight, but that our predecessors failed to do so is no reason to diminish the city that they did build, and that we continue to build. Frank O'Hara wrote, "I can't even enjoy a blade of grass unless I know there's a subway handy, or a record store or some other sign that people do not totally *regret* life." If Sanderson's fascinating work is seen simply as a narrative of our fall from primeval grace, it will convince New Yorkers that their present environment is only to be regretted. It will further separate them from the fibre of their city, when it should be binding them closer.

Gabriel Ross
Oakland, Calif.

EARLY ENLIGHTENMENT

Larissa MacFarquhar, in writing about the Eastern guru Swami Parthasarathy helping the business élite cope with stress, offers an illustration of the modern—and often contradictory—applications of ancient philosophies (The Talk of the Town, October 15th). It seems absurd for corporate America to adopt a "lack of attachment"—which, undoubtedly, is a hallmark of a stress-free life—since, in the Darwinian world of high finance, the concept of detachment in the boardroom is an oxymoron. Although the ascetic pursuit of detachment is probably as old as early civilization, it was espoused by early- and late-medieval Christian mystics, including Meister Eckhart (c. 1260-c. 1328), Thomas à Kempis (c. 1380-1471), and, more recently, by Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-45). Their version of detachment, however, would not garner invitations to corporate dinners, for they eschewed the accumulation of wealth on any level beyond strict personal needs. I have no doubt that, while these mystics would likely fail at Wharton or Kellogg, they nonetheless led truly stress-free lives.

Eric Clark
Del Mar, Calif.

•

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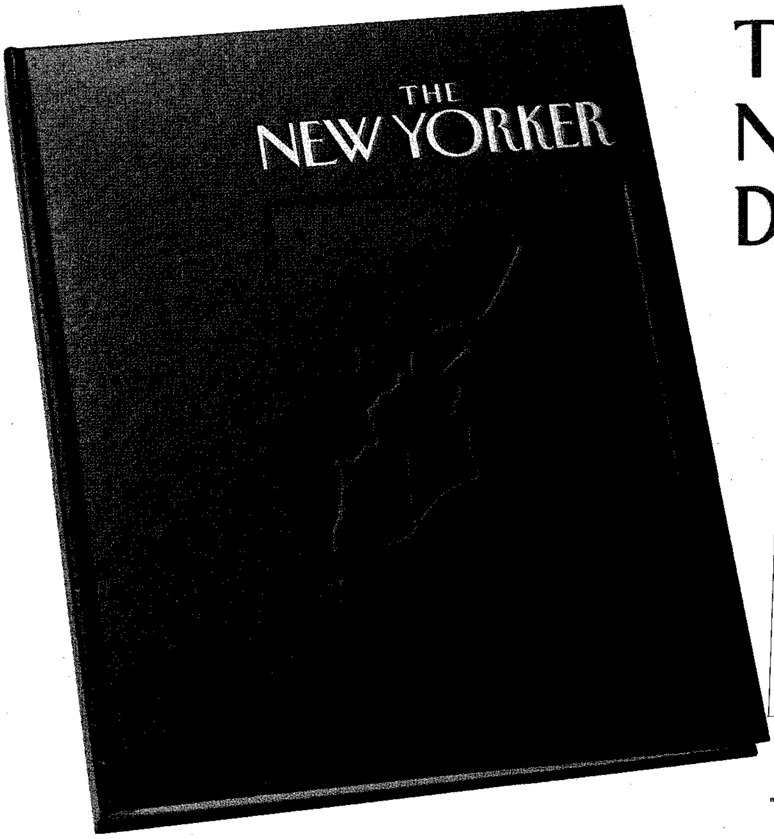

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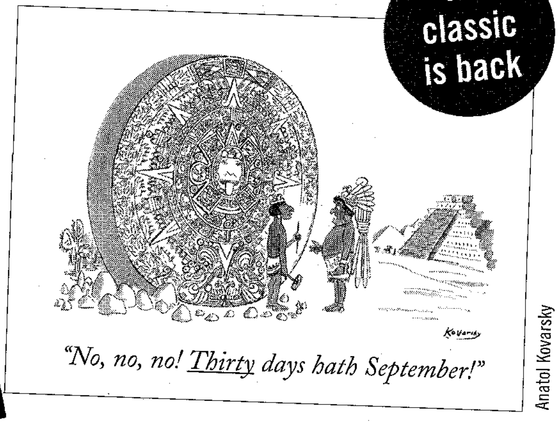
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Anatol Kovarsky

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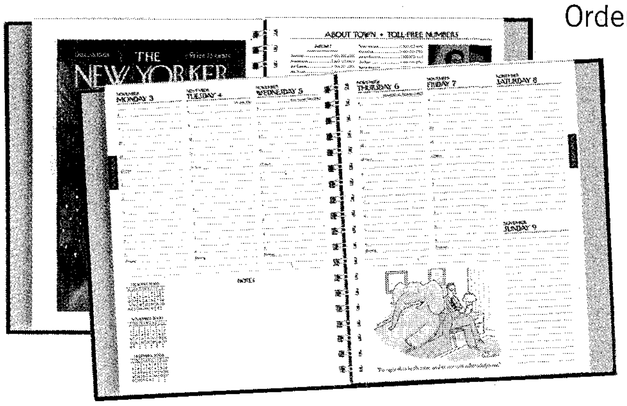

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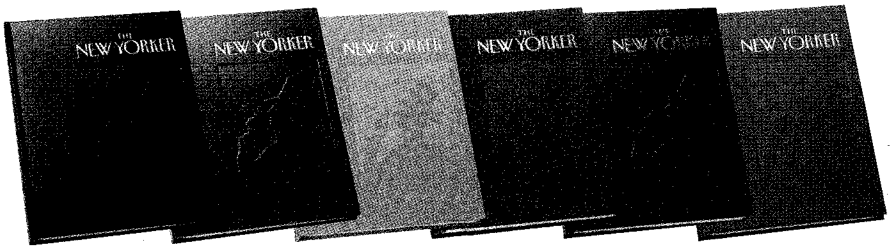

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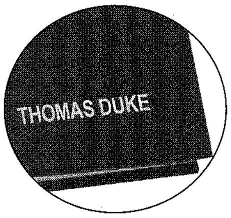

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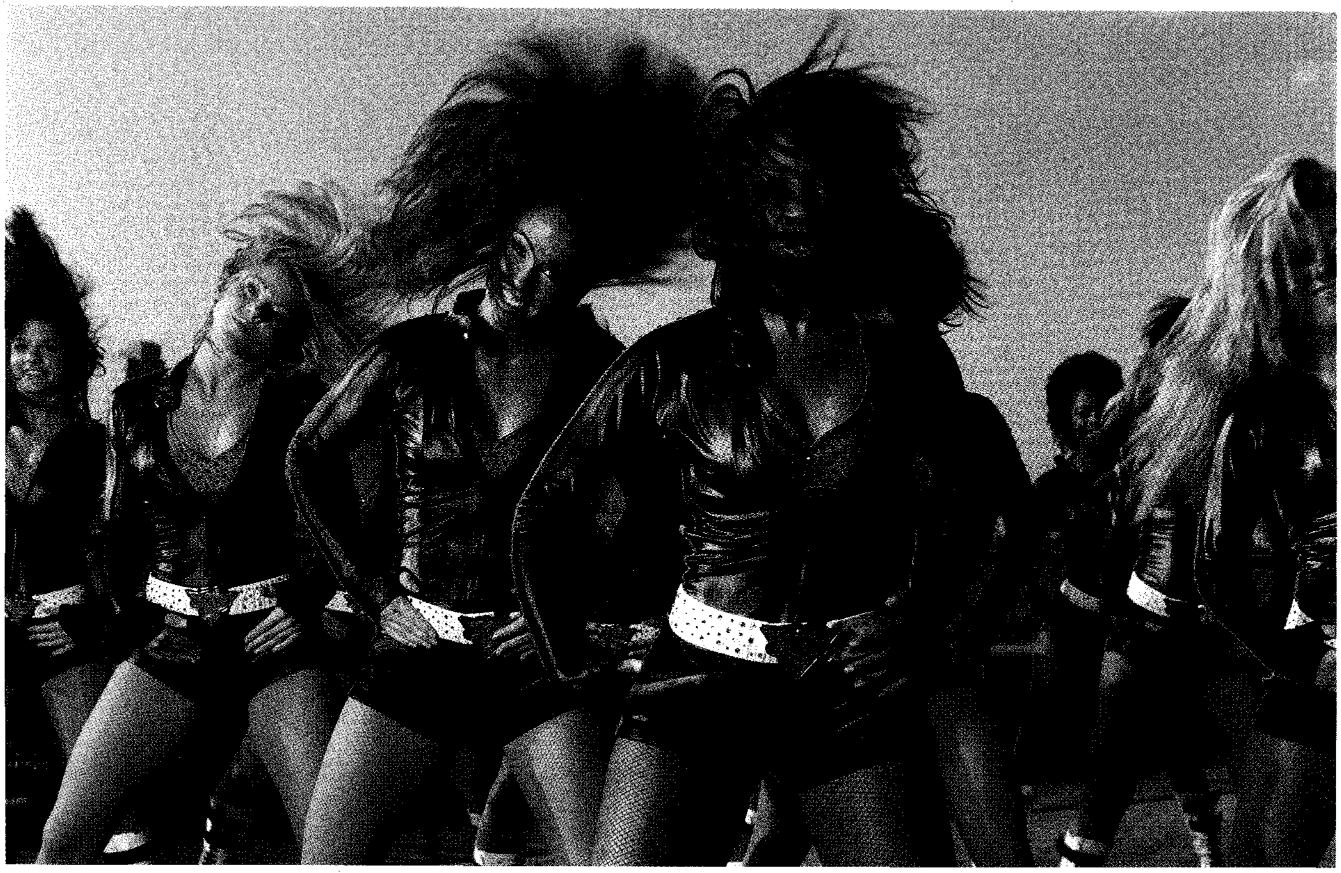

The Knicks City Dancers, the dance team of the New York Knicks. Photograph by Brian Finke.

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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THIS WEEK

THE THEATRE
ONE-ACT WONDER

The Brooklyn-based playwright Will Eno follows up "Thom Pain (Based on Nothing)" and a new translation of "Peer Gynt" with "Oh, the Humanity and Other Good Intentions," a series of five vignettes, starring Marisa Tomei. Jim Simpson directs, at the Flea. (See page 11.)

NIGHT LIFE
OUT OF THE DARK

The guitarist and songwriter Dan Kaufman and his band, Barbez, recently completed a new album, "Force of Light," that was inspired by the poetry of Paul Celan. The Scottish playwright, poet, and performance artist Fiona Templeton recited some of Celan's poems on the disk, and she will be accompanying the band at its record-release show at the Issue Project Room. (See page 14.)

ART
OBJECT LESSON

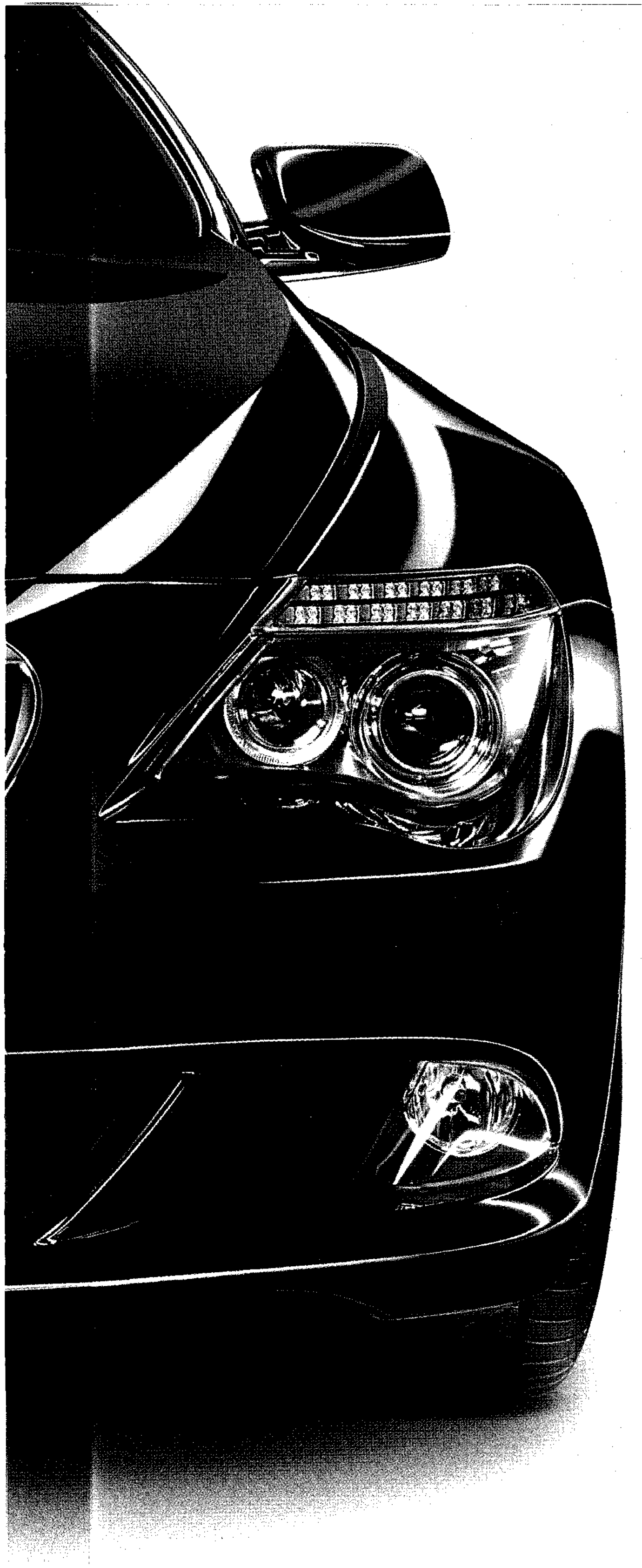
MOMA follows up its recent Richard Serra show with a retrospective of work by another titan of contemporary American sculpture, Martin Puryear. (See page 15.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC
HAMELIN ON HAYDN

The Canadian pianist and composer Marc-André Hamelin, long renowned for his astounding technique on the instrument, is winning raves for the interpretive command he displays on his new disk of Haydn sonatas. Hamelin's solo recital at the Rose Theatre features one of them, along with Chopin's Sonata No. 3 and Book II of Debussy's "Préludes." (See page 19.)

MOVIES
THE GERMINATOR

Pietro Germi—who was born in Genoa in 1914 and died in Rome in 1974—was one of the great genre masters of the postwar Italian cinema; he infused Mob thrillers, Westerns, melodramas, and war movies with humanity and craftsmanship. "Seduced and Abandoned" and "Divorce—Italian Style" are among the classics of nineteen-sixties comic drama; "Alfredo, Alfredo," from 1972, stars Dustin Hoffman alongside Stefania Sandrelli. Film Forum offers three weeks of Germi's films. (See page 24.)



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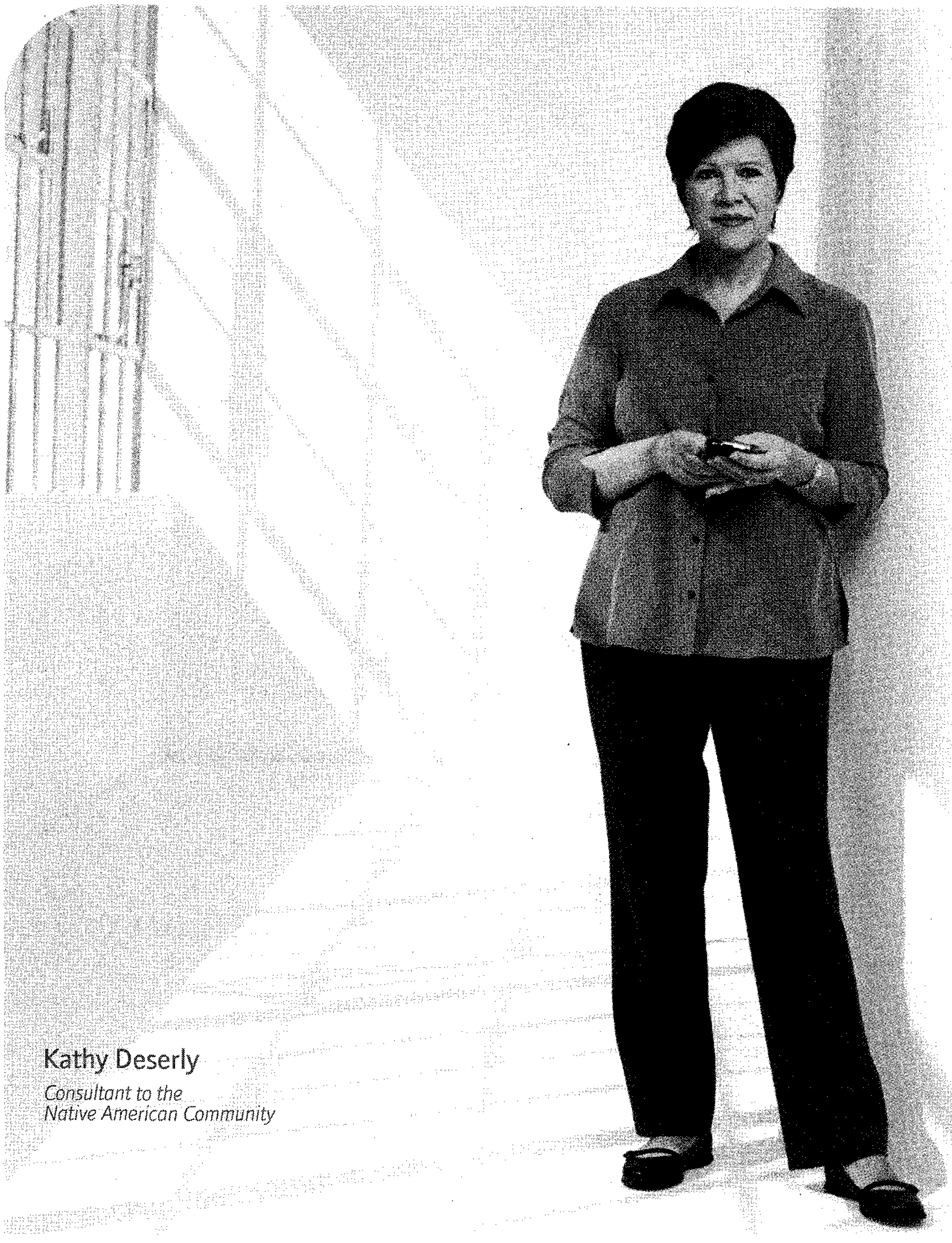

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THE THEATRE
OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.

AUGUST: OSAGE COUNTY
This Steppenwolf transfer by Tracy Letts ("Bug") is about the disappearance of an Oklahoma family man. In previews. (Imperial, 245 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

FRANKENSTEIN
A new musical inspired by Mary Shelley's novel, adapted by Gary P. Cohen. With music by Mark Baron and book and lyrics by Jeffrey Jackson. In previews. Opens Nov. 1. (37 Arts, 450 W. 37th St. 212-307-4100.)

THE GLORIOUS ONES
A new musical by Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty, based on Francine Prose's novel about a troupe of commedia-dell'arte actors in seventeenth-century Italy. Graciela Daniele directs. In previews. Opens Nov. 5. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, 150 W. 65th St. 212-239-6200.)

TABLES FOR TWO
EL QUINTO PINO

401 W. 24th St. (212-206-6900)—The other night at this tiny tapas bar in Chelsea, diners crowded in at the elegantly curved marble bar, most of them tapping away at iPhones. El Quinto Pino, the sophomore effort of Heather Belz, Mani Dawes, and Alexandra Raij, the owners of the much praised Tía Pol, is the kind of spot that by pedigree and authenticity appeals to those who pride themselves on being in the know. In ethos, El Quinto Pino, like its progenitor, runs counter to the recent tapas growth spurt, which has entailed both a proliferation of the term (now often used to refer to any kind of shared plates) and the expansion of portion size, to the point where four or five dishes between a pair don't merely satiate but stuff.

By contrast, here it seems as though you could order the entire menu—confined to a small blackboard hung above the bar—and feel only moderately gluttonous. A stew of chickpeas was smoky and laced with spinach; four garlicky shrimp arrived still bubbling with heat. A more unconventional option was the pig's-ear salad, served cold and with a vinegary dressing. The ears, carved into bite-sized chunks, were a little gray, and gristly; one could easily imagine them flapping against a porcine skull. (It didn't taste bad, exactly, but it was the only dish left unfinished.) Slightly less shocking (and infinitely more appealing) was the sea-urchin panini, a slim cylinder of baguette slathered with butter, spice, and briny, aphrodisiacal roe.

The space is a mere sliver, about half the size of Tía Pol, and there aren't any tables—you pull a stool up to the bar or you stand. You're not meant to linger, though you're welcome to—the bartenders are friendly, and ask your name (mainly to keep track of the orders, but it feels sincere). At the end of the evening, racking his brain for the great Thai place out in Queens that he insisted a diner had to try, the bartender asked for an e-mail address. A few days later, the message arrived; he still hadn't remembered the name, but in the meantime he'd collected a list of the chef's favorite restaurants and food carts. He had scribbled them onto a napkin and then scanned the whole thing in; conveniently, it could be downloaded onto an iPhone. (Open daily for dinner. Dishes $3-$15.)

—*Andrea Thompson*

BINGO WITH THE INDIANS
At the Flea, a new play by Adam Rapp, about an East Village theatre company that travels to a small New England town. The Bats, the Flea's resident company, star; Rapp directs. In previews. (41 White St. 212-352-3101.)

THE BROTHERS SIZE
The Public Theatre presents the première of a play by Tarell Alvin McCraney, about two brothers, one a mechanic and the other a parolee. Tea Alagic directs. In previews. Opens Nov. 6. (425 Lafayette St. 212-967-7555.)

CYMBELINE
Michael Cerveris, Martha Plimpton, and Phylicia Rashad star in this Shakespeare romance. Mark Lamos directs. Previews begin Nov. 1. (Vivian Beaumont, 150 W. 65th St. 212-239-6200.)

CYRANO DE BERGERAC
Kevin Kline and Jennifer Garner star in Edmond Rostand's play from 1897, with a translation by Anthony Burgess. David Leveaux directs. In previews. Opens Nov. 1. (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 212-239-6200.)

DR. SEUSS' HOW THE GRINCH STOLE CHRISTMAS! THE MUSICAL
The classic holiday story, adapted for the stage, returns. Jack O'Brien directs. Previews begin Nov. 1. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.)

THE FARNSWORTH INVENTION
Hank Azaria and Jimmi Simpson star in a new play by Aaron Sorkin, about Philo Farnsworth, the boy genius who invented television, and David Sarnoff, the head of R.C.A., who challenged his patent ownership. Des McAnuff directs. In previews. (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

HAMLET
The New York première of the Wooster Group's production, directed by Elizabeth LeCompte. Opens Oct. 31. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 212-967-7555.)

A HARD HEART
Kathleen Chalfant stars in this play by Howard Barker, in which a fictitious country is invaded. Will Pomerantz directs the Epic Theatre Ensemble production. In previews. (Clurman, 410 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

THE JOY LUCK CLUB
Pan Asian Repertory presents Susan Kim's adaptation of Amy Tan's novel. In previews. (Julia Miles, 424 W. 55th St. 212-239-6200.)

THE LITTLE MERMAID
Francesca Zambello directs the adaptation of the film, with a book by Doug Wright and music and lyrics by Alan Menken, Howard Ashman, and Glenn Slater. Previews begin Nov. 3. (Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 212-307-4747.)

OH, THE HUMANITY AND OTHER GOOD INTENTIONS
Marisa Tomei stars in the première of a new work by Will Eno, five short plays about everyday life. Jim Simpson directs. Previews begin Nov. 3. (Flea, 41 White St. 212-352-3101.)

OHIO STATE MURDERS
LisaGay Hamilton stars in Adrienne Kennedy's play, about a writer whose troubled past is brought to light on a visit to her alma mater. Evan Yionoulis directs the Theatre for a New Audience production. In previews. Opens Nov. 4. (The Duke on 42nd Street, 229 W. 42nd St. 646-223-3010.)

1001
Page 73 presents the première of a drama by Jason Grote, a take on Scheherazade's tales, exploring

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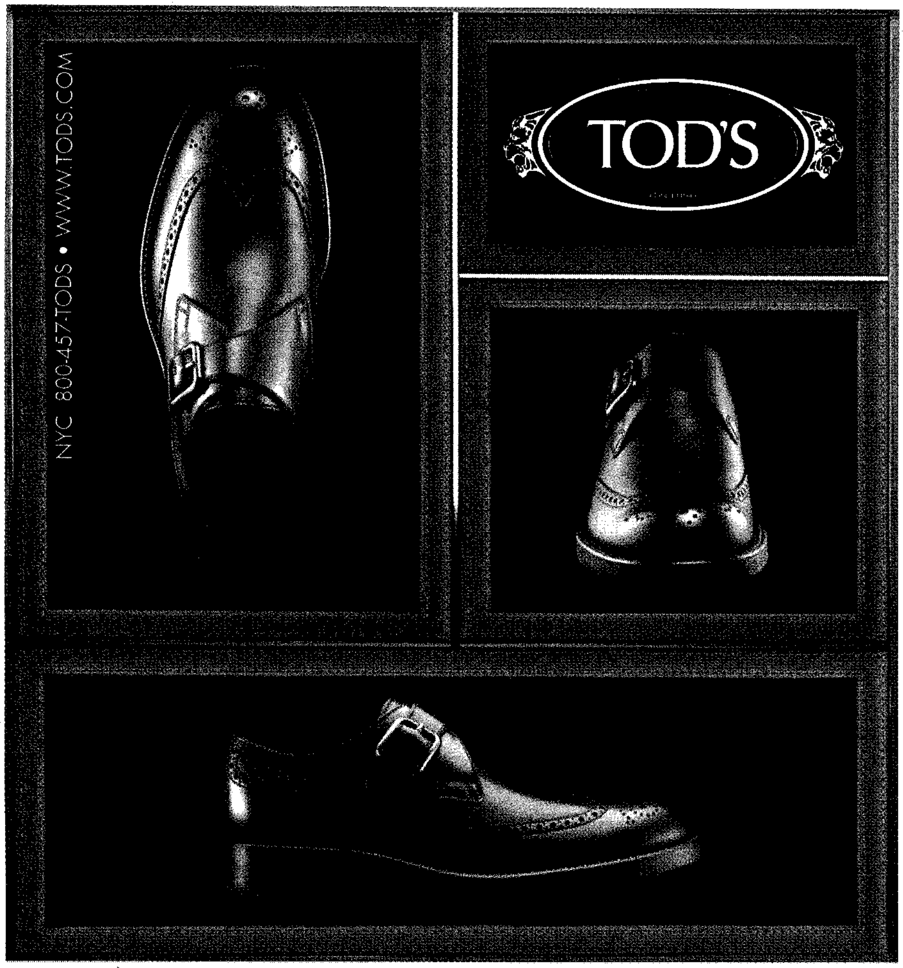

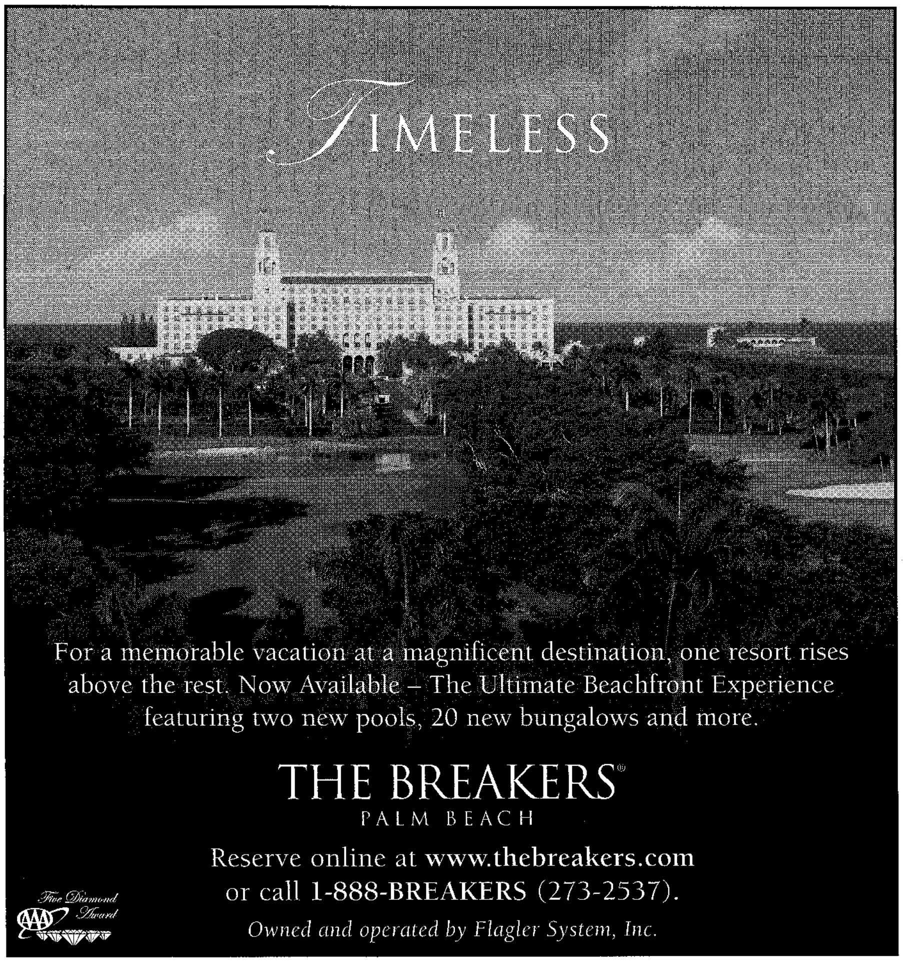

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Israeli-Palestinian politics. Opens Oct. 31. (Nagelberg Theatre at Baruch Performing Arts Center, 55 Lexington Ave. 212-352-3101.)

PETER AND JERRY
Edward Albee has expanded his 1959 drama "Zoo Story," adding a new first act, about the earlier life of the character Peter. Bill Pullman, Dallas Roberts, and Johanna Day star. Pam MacKinnon directs. In previews. (Second Stage, 307 W. 43rd St. 212-246-4422.)

THE PIANO TEACHER
The Vineyard Theatre opens its season with the première of a new play by Julia Cho, about a retired piano teacher. Kate Whoriskey directs. In previews. (108 E. 15th St. 212-353-0303.)

QUEENS BOULEVARD (THE MUSICAL)
Signature Theatre Company presents the première of a musical by Charles Mee, in which a groom gets caught up in the city streets on his wedding day. Previews begin Nov. 6. (Peter Norton Space, 555 W. 42nd St. 212-244-7529.)

RICHARD III
Classic Stage Company presents the Shakespeare history play, starring Michael Cumpsty. Brian Kulick co-directs, with Cumpsty. Previews begin Nov. 1. (136 E. 13th St. 212-352-3101.)

ROCK 'N' ROLL
Brian Cox, Sinéad Cusack, and Rufus Sewell star in Tom Stoppard's new play, directed by Trevor Nunn, about an anti-Communist Prague rock band and the family of a British Marxist philosopher. In previews. Opens Nov. 4. (Bernard B. Jacobs, 242 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

THE SEAFARER
Conor McPherson's new play, set in Dublin on Christmas Eve, follows two aging brothers, one of whom is blind. The cast includes Ciarán Hinds, Conleth Hill, and David Morse. McPherson directs. In previews. (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

THINGS WE WANT
The New Group presents the world première of a play by Jonathan Marc Sherman, directed by Ethan Hawke. Paul Dano, Peter Dinklage, Josh Hamilton, and Zoe Kazan star. In previews. (Acorn, 410 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN
Mel Brooks adapts his 1974 film into a musical; Thomas Meehan co-wrote and Susan Stroman choreographs and directs. Roger Bart, Megan Mullally, Sutton Foster, Andrea Martin, and Christopher Fitzgerald star. In previews. (Hilton, 213 W. 42nd St. 212-307-4100.)

NOW PLAYING

BLACK WATCH
The Scottish regiment known as Black Watch (nicknamed for the dark tartans worn by its members) boasted nearly three centuries of fighting other people's wars, until it was amalgamated out of existence, in 2006, after a deadly tour in Iraq. The National Theatre of Scotland based this funny, surprising, and visually limpid piece on interviews with recent veterans: jocular lads who enlisted as nonchalant outsiders hoping to trade their war stories for chicks and returned jaded and angry, if at all. Despite the gravity of its subject, there isn't a drab moment in John Tiffany's kinetic staging, in which winning scenes of soldiers' banter dissolve into arresting interludes of movement and songs. (St. Ann's Warehouse, 38 Water St., Brooklyn. 718-254-8779.)

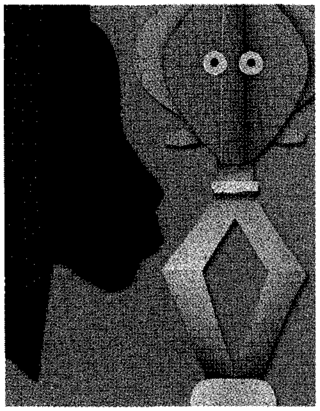
A BRONX TALE
The Broadway début of Chazz Palminteri's 1989 one-man drama. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 212-239-6200.)

DIE MOMMIE DIE!
Charles Busch makes every camp dream come true in his clawed comedy of Hollywood glamour gone sour. Busch plays Angela Arden, a washed-up nineteen-sixties diva with a penchant for booze, sex, and bitchy glares, who kills her husband with a poisoned suppository, inciting the vengeance of her malicious daughter and vacant gay son. She's also hiding something unsavory about her twin sister, who died under mysterious circumstances years ago. There's more humor here in the outlandish way

SILJA GÖTZ

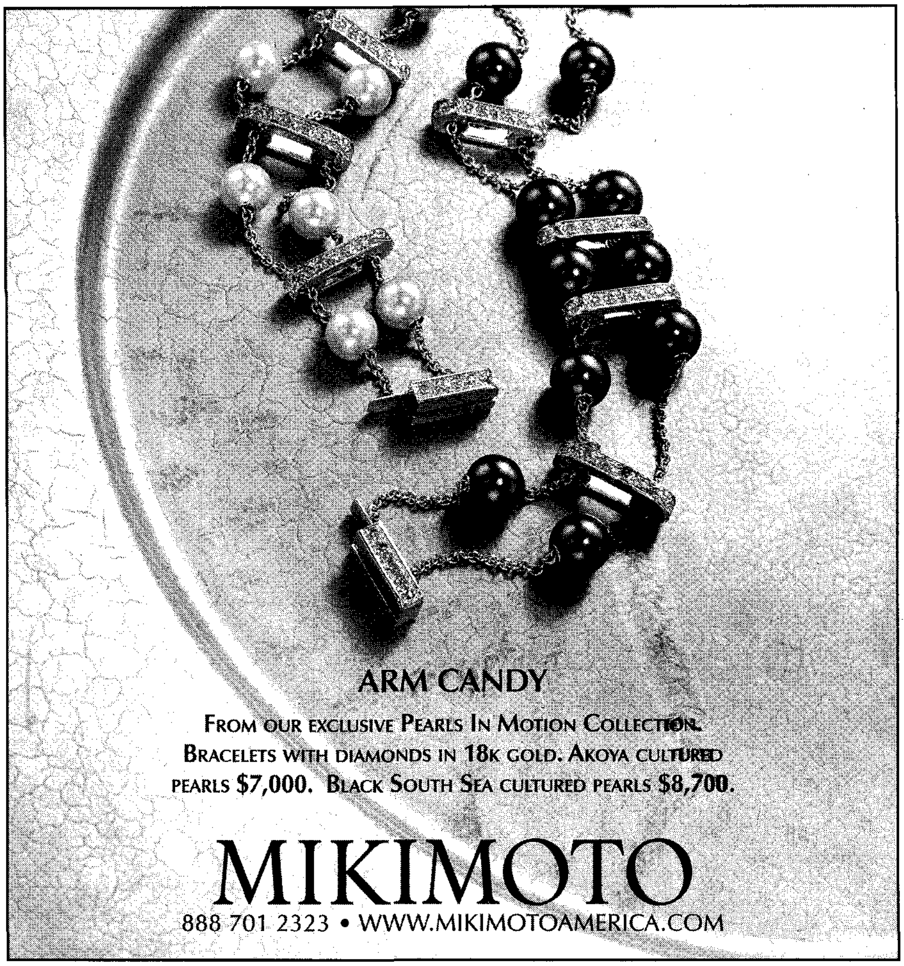
CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK
INTO AFRICA

One recent Sunday at the Met, when "The Age of Rembrandt" was as jammed as a clown car, a few viewers had the run of an astonishing sculpture show, "Eternal Ancestors: The Art of the Central African Reliquary."



Smartly chosen objects, most from the nineteenth century, enable instant connoisseurship of traditions whose famous impact on modern art, via Picasso et al., is incidental to their quality: better than modern art, by and large. No Western master improves on the formal genius of the best Fang reliquary figures (made to guard vessels full of ancestral remains) and Kwele masks. Focus on details of the black, glisteningly oiled Fang pieces: rhythmic elongation and compression of body parts, heads domed like cosmic eggs, sublimely abstracted hair plaits, and backs whose subtle planes flabbergast. Some of the unknown artists were powerful and crude, others elegant and a mite bland. But the maker of the statue that, when shown in London in 1933, was dubbed "the Black Venus" beggars Brancusi.

—*Peter Schjeldahl*



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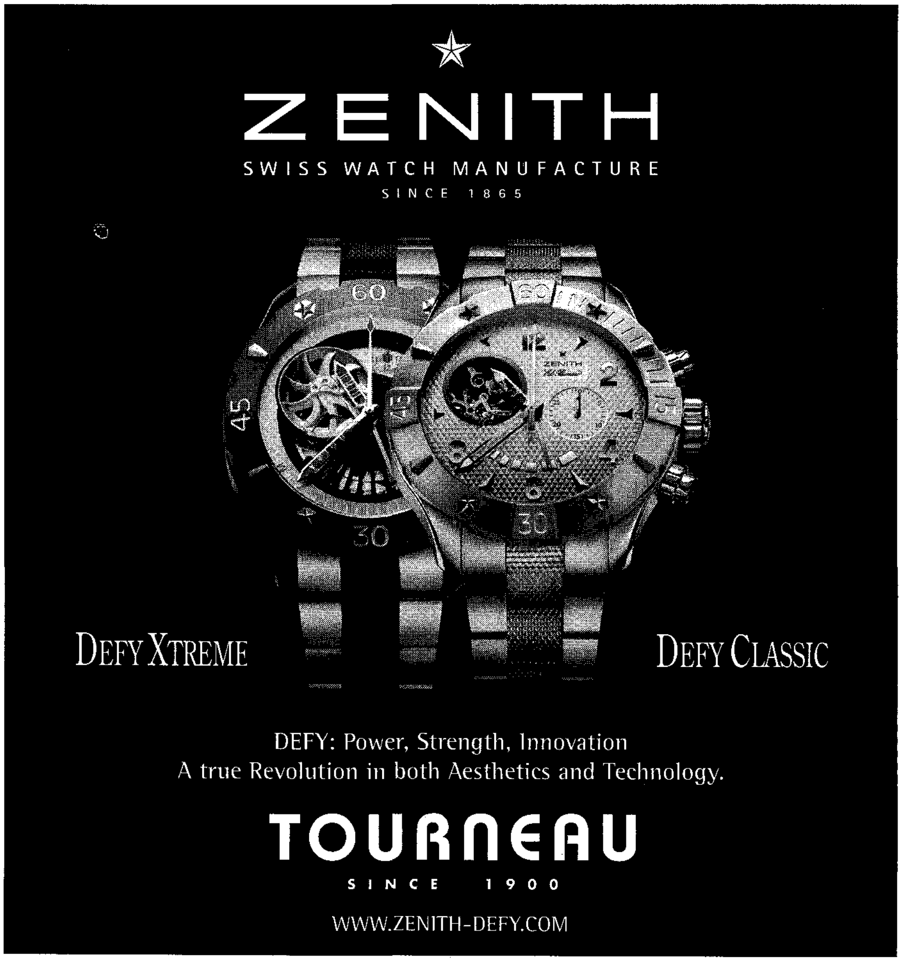

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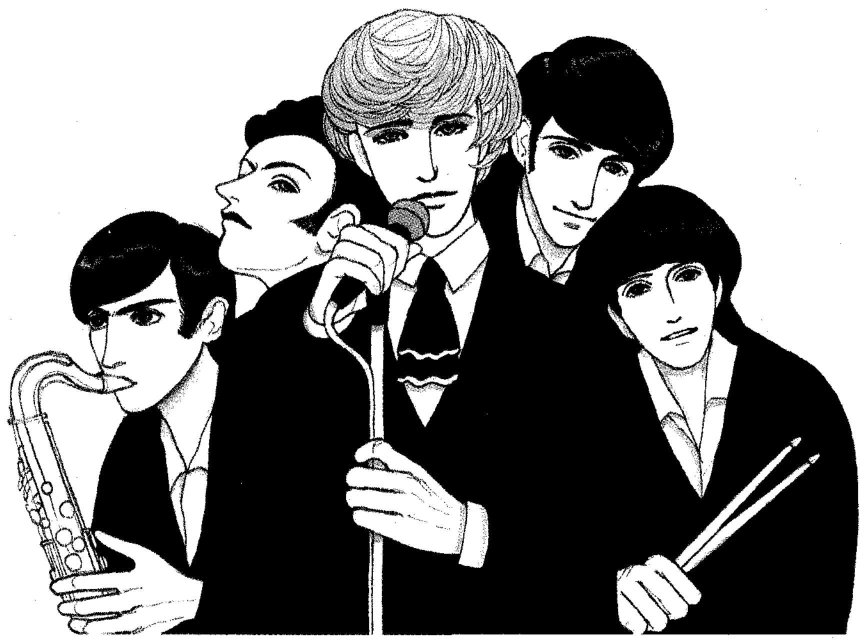
the plot unfolds—only Busch's costume changes can keep pace—than in the B-movie dialogue. But what really puts the arsenic on the cake is all the wicked fun Busch and his cast seem to be having. (New World Stages, 340 W. 50th St. 212-239-6200.)

FUERZABRUTA
The new show from the creators of "De La Guarda," a wordless riot of physical exertion, propulsive dance music, and visceral imagery (the title means "Brute Force"), delights greatly in its own daring. There's a hint of narrative and a surfeit of wind, fog, acrobatics, and confetti. At one point, Mylar walls appear, surrounding the audience (who stand throughout the performance), and two women, high in the air and horizontal, chase each other along them. A clear swimming pool is lowered over the audience members' heads, and the writhing women within are close enough to touch. The show is triumphantly opposed to "meaning" anything, and it's clear that the audience and performers alike couldn't be happier with the results. (Daryl Roth, 20 Union Sq. E. 212-239-6200.)



The Sonics, the legendary garage-rock band, reunite for "Cavestomp!," at Warsaw.

AKIKO KATO

HOODOO LOVE
Katori Hall wrote this play, set in the Mississippi Delta and Memphis, about a young woman who wants to sing the blues. Lucie Tiberghien directs. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 212-239-6200.)

THE OVERWHELMING
Roundabout Theatre Company presents a drama by J. T. Rogers. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Laura Pels, 111 W. 46th St. 212-719-1300.)

PYGMALION
In Shaw's 1913 play (at the American Airlines), Eliza Doolittle (Claire Danes)—undernourished and filthy, peddling flowers near Covent Garden—believes that she has something to offer the world. Professor Henry Higgins (Jefferson Mays) tells his friend Colonel Pickering (Boyd Gaines) that he is taking Eliza on as a student for his own purposes. It's rather touching that Danes is most affecting when she's relegated to saying absolutely nothing; but when she has to use Shaw's words to express Eliza's pain or desire she goes flat. Fortunately for the inventive and solid director, David Grindley, he has Jefferson Mays to work with. It's difficult to make a prig funny, but in his early scenes Mays does so expertly. The trouble is that Mays then recedes, infusing his character with the prissy concerns of a schoolmaster. (Reviewed in our issue of 10/29/07.) (227 W. 42nd St. 212-719-1300.)

Also Playing

AVENUE Q: Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **A CHORUS LINE:** Schoenfeld, 236 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **CURTAINS:** Al Hirschfeld, 302 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **GONE MISSING:** Barrow Street Theatre, 27 Barrow St. 212-239-6200. **JERSEY BOYS:** August Wilson, 245 W. 52nd St. 212-239-6200. **JUMP:** Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 212-307-4100. **MARGARET CHO'S THE SENSUOUS WOMAN:** Zipper, 336 W. 37th St. 212-352-3101. **NONE OF THE ABOVE:** Lion, 410 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200. **THE RITZ:** Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 212-719-1300. **SPRING AWAKENING:** Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 212-239-6200. **A VIEW FROM 151ST STREET:** Public, 425 Lafayette St. 212-967-7555. Through Nov. 4. **XANADU:** Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.

NIGHT LIFE
ROCK AND POP

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

BARRYMORE THEATRE
243 W. 47th St. (212-239-6200)—Nov. 1-3 and Nov. 5-6: **Duran Duran.** England's preëminent band of the early eighties is on its umpteenth comeback tour to promote its genuinely anticipated thirteenth studio album, "Red Carpet Massacre," with a residency in the heart of the theatre district. The band, striving to reinspire the mania they enjoyed during the Reagan Administration, has been working with such au-courant producers as Timbaland and his protégé Nate (Danja) Hills. Through Nov. 13.

B. B. KING BLUES CLUB & GRILL
237 W. 42nd St. (212-997-4144)—Oct. 31: The **Misfits,** the pride of Lodi, New Jersey, were a seminal punk-rock outfit whose preoccupation with horror and gore teetered between the campy and the creepy. The original vocalist, Glenn Danzig, dissolved the band in 1983, going off to form Samhain (which had similar inclinations), and then another outfit, called Danzig (which achieved quite a different level of commercial success). The co-founder, Jerry Only, re-formed the Misfits without Danzig in 1996, and has led a variety of incarnations of the band since then. The opening act is **Balzac,** a Japanese ensemble of disquietingly devout Misfits fans who ape their mentors' sartorial, tonsorial, and musical style. Nov. 4: **Ky-Mani Marley,** the son of the table-tennis champion Anita Belnavis and the reggae icon.

BOWERY BALLROOM
6 Delancey St. (212-533-2111)—Nov. 1: The shimmering and mellow sixties-style indie pop of **Rogue Wave.** Nov. 2: **Lyrics Born,** the nom de hip-hop of the Bay Area musician and entrepreneur Tom Shimura.

BROOKLYN ACADEMY OF MUSIC
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn. (718-636-4100)—Nov. 1-3: The ambitious young singer-songwriter and multi-instrumentalist **Sufjan Stevens,** who is known for, among other things, embarking on a project to write and record an album for each of the fifty states (he has forty-eight to go), turns his attention to one of the most feared features of his adopted borough of Brooklyn, the B.Q.E. Commissioned to write a piece for the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Next Wave Festival, he has come up with a thirty-minute orchestral suite about the antiquated expressway; it will be accompanied by a choreographed retinue of hula-hoop dancers and a short film that was shot on the roadway.

CLUB MIDWAY
25 Avenue B, at 2nd St. (212-253-2595)—Oct. 31: The **Saints.** New York has the Ramones, London has the Sex Pistols, and Brisbane has the Saints. Practicing a bracing brand of buzz-saw-guitar rock, the Saints came barrelling out of Australia in the late seventies in perfect stylistic synch with their American and British peers. The band's signature single, "(I'm) Stranded," easily gave the aforementioned bands a run for their money. The band eventually matured to play more straight-ahead rock, but their status as genre pioneers remains undisputed.

FILLMORE NEW YORK AT IRVING PLAZA
17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (212-777-6800)—Nov. 2: The crashing bumper-car stylings of **Superdrag,** a power-pop combo out of Knoxville, Tennessee, that had a hit a little over ten years ago with the song "Sucked Out." The band took a break from recording and performing earlier this decade, but it's back on the road now, much to the delight of its MTV-addled fans.

ISSUE PROJECT ROOM
232 3rd St., at Third Ave., 3rd fl., Brooklyn. (718-330-0313)—Nov. 3: Dan Kaufman and his band, **Barbez**—which includes the vibraphone and marimba player Danny Tunick and the theremin master Pamelia Kurstin—set up inside this large, sanctuary-like space in Brooklyn's Old American Can Factory to celebrate the release of their new album, "Force of Light," the culmination of a three-year effort interpreting the sparse and razor-sharp work of the Romanian Jewish poet Paul Celan. They will be joined by Fiona Templeton, who recited the poems on the record, and others.

JOE'S PUB
425 Lafayette St. (212-539-8777)—Nov. 1-2: The country noir of **Mary Gauthier.** Nov. 3-4: The folksinger **Richard Shindell.** Nov. 6: **John Doe,** who rose to fame as the front man for the Los Angeles punk band X, delivers songs from his latest solo album, "A Year in the Wilderness."

KNITTING FACTORY
74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (212-219-3055)—Oct. 31: The local all-girl folk-rock group **Antigone Rising** celebrates Halloween by dressing as Fleetwood Mac and covering the album "Rumors." The performance will be followed by a set of the sharply tooled, retro-sounding music that earned them the backing of Starbucks' Hear Music program.

TERMINAL 5
610 W. 56th St. (212-260-4700)—Nov. 3: Lately, the local Gypsy-punk phenomenon **Gogol Bordello** has been moving up in the world—the group has been befriended by Madonna, joining her onstage at London's Live Earth concert last summer. Despite its higher profile, the band hasn't compromised its intoxicating (and intoxicated) approach in the slightest.

UNITED PALACE
4140 Broadway, at 175th St. (212-307-7171)—Oct. 30-31: The **Black Crowes** take the stage. Led by the Robinson brothers, these seventies-flavored, Southern-fried retro rockers pine for the days of Zeppelinesque hedonism. Nov 3: **Annie Lennox,** the icily androgynous powerhouse from the Eurythmics, has a new solo album, "Songs of Mass Destruction."

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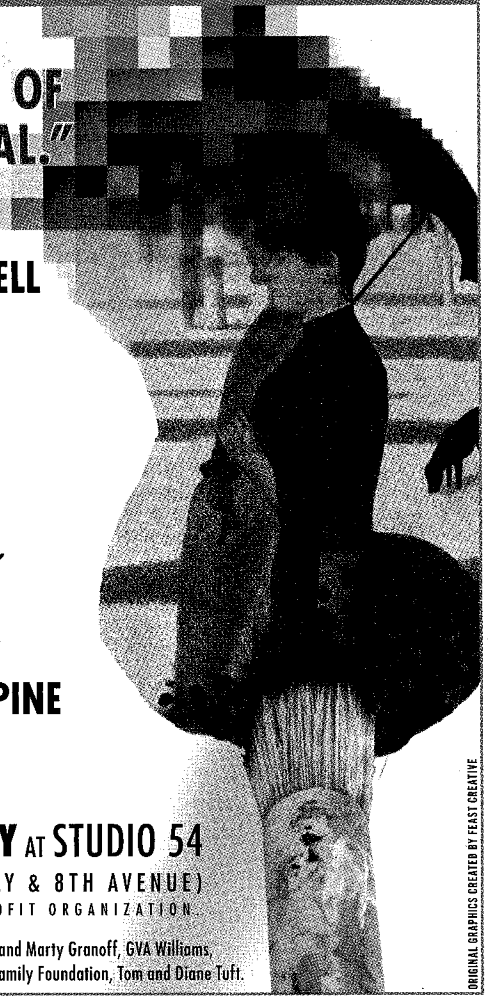

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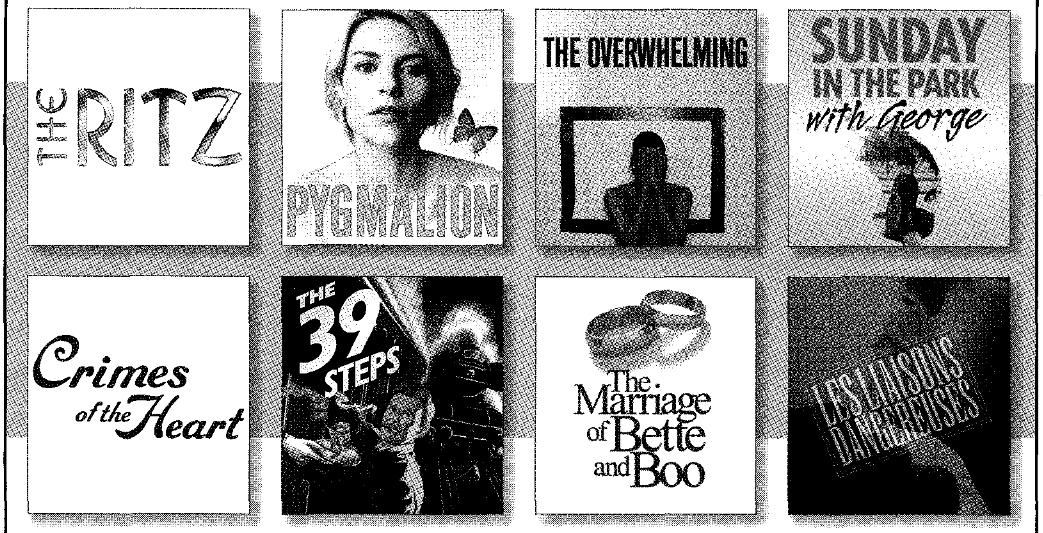

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WARSAW

261 Driggs Ave., Brooklyn (212-307-7171)—Nov. 2-4: **"Cavestomp! The Garage Rock Festacular!"** In the early sixties, long before the grunge boom of the nineties, the **Sonics** put Washington State on the rock map with its feral, incendiary music. The band never cracked the mainstream, but it is slavishly adored by rock archivists and record collectors. Jon Weiss, the founder of this festival, started "Cavestomp!" a decade ago in the hope of getting the Sonics back together. He has succeeded, thirty-five years after a single reunion show in Seattle and nearly four decades after the band's disintegration. The band has been rehearsing regularly for the past eight months, and by all accounts it's more than ready to hit the stage. The Sonics play opening and closing nights. The **Strawberry Alarm Clock** (of "Incense and Peppermints" fame) has the headlining slot on Nov. 3, and each night there is a slew of other highly charged garage acts.

WORLD MUSIC INSTITUTE

Nov. 2: A night of striking rhythms with the **Kálman Bálogh Gypsy Cimbalom Band,** from Budapest, and other acts. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. For more information, call 212-545-7536.)

ZANKEL HALL

Carnegie Hall, 57th St. at Seventh Ave. (212-247-7800)—Carnegie Hall's "Berlin in Lights" festival brings a bit of the German capital's music scene to New York City. Nov. 5: The electronic beats of **Nomad SoundSystem.**

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

CAFÉ CARLYLE

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (212-744-1600)—Starting Oct. 30: The singer **Steve Tyrell** hits town to turn on the holiday charm. Expect tunes from his popular release "This Time of Year," from 2002, as well as from his forthcoming album, "Back to Bacharach."

CAFÉ SABARSKY

Neue Galerie, Fifth Ave. at 86th St. (212-628-6200, ext. 485)—Carnegie Hall's "Berlin in Lights" festival (see Zankel Hall, above) sets up a second stage here this month. It starts on Nov. 2-3 with **Ute Lemper.** The enchanting, multilingual vocalist keeps her act shaded with edgy theatricality; she's the perfect contemporary representative of Weimar-era night life.

DIZZY'S CLUB COCA-COLA

Broadway at 60th St. (212-258-9595)—Oct. 30-Nov. 4: Neo-hard bop doesn't come more polished than in the quartet featuring the tenor saxophonist **Eric Alexander** and the veteran pianist **Harold Mabern.** The guitarist **Pat Martino,** another active sixties mainstay, joins them. Nov. 5: The trumpeter **Valery Ponomarov** leads a big-band tribute to his former employer and mentor, the drummer Art Blakey.

FEINSTEIN'S AT LOEWS REGENCY

540 Park Ave., at 61st St. (212-339-4095)—Oct. 30-Nov. 3: **Lynda Carter,** perhaps most famous for her role on television in the seventies as Wonder Woman, has proven that she can deflect bullets. Here, she'll attempt an even tougher act, when she makes her local cabaret début.

IRIDIUM

1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (212-582-2121)—Oct. 31-Nov. 1: The **Sun Ra Arkestra.** Although Sun Ra himself presumably returned to his cosmic homeland more than a decade ago, his faithful, delightfully anarchic ensemble continues its mission, now under the leadership of the saxophonist **Marshall Allen.** Nov. 2-4: The alto saxophonist **Charles McPherson** hooks up with the trumpeter **Tom Harrell** and a charging rhythm section to pay tribute to bop maestros Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie.

JAZZ STANDARD

116 E. 27th St. (212-576-2232)—The industrious saxophonist, clarinettist, and bandleader **Anat Cohen** presents four ensembles this week. Oct. 30-31: Her **Brazilian Jazz Quartet.** Nov. 1: The Quartet 4 with the guitarist **Gilad Hekselman.** Nov. 2-3: The Anzic Orchestra with the guest saxophonist **Joel Frahm.** Nov. 4: Her brothers **Yuval,** on soprano saxophone, and **Avishai,** on trumpet, join her in the 3 Cohens Sextet.

VILLAGE VANGUARD

178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (212-255-4037)—Through Nov. 4: The pianist **Bill Charlap** and his trio. The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (212-535-7710)—**"The Age of Rembrandt"** arrays all two hundred and twenty-eight of the Met's circa-seventeenth-century Dutch paintings according to the dates they were acquired. The dubious idea pays off, as odd juxtapositions of stupendous Rembrandts and Vermeers with radiant lesser masters (and intriguing faux Rembrandts) jolt the pictures to fresh attention. Through Jan. 6, 2008. ♦ **"Tapestry in the Baroque: Threads of Splendor,"** though gorgeous, is a comedown from the Met's thunderclap 2002 show of Renaissance tapestries, which awakened us to an almost forgotten major art form (collaborative like the movies, with auteurs including Raphael) that flourished in the age of big-walled, drafty palaces. That tradition stumbled in the Baroque. Pictorial styles of solid form in swirling space ill suit the flat textile medium, despite tours de force by Rubens and Le Brun (whose "Battle of the Granicus," designed in 1664-65, is a grand hoot). More satisfying than the tortuously modelled mythological, court, and war scenes are their decorative borders, where stitchery flexes its proper powers. Through Jan. 6, 2008. ♦ **"Eternal Ancestors: The Art of the Central African Reliquary."** Through March 2, 2008. ♦ **"Abstract Expressionism and Other Modern Works: The Muriel Kallis Steinberg Newman Collection."** Through Feb. 3, 2008. ♦ **"The Gates of Paradise: Lorenzo Ghiberti's Renaissance Masterpiece."** Through Jan. 13, 2008. ♦ **"Impressed by Light: British Photographs from Paper Negatives, 1840-1860."** Through Dec. 31. ♦ **"Gifts for the Gods: Images from Egyptian Temples."** Through Feb. 18, 2008. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9400)—**"Martin Puryear."** Opens Nov. 4. ♦ **"Georges Seurat: The Drawings."** Through Jan. 7, 2008. ♦ **"Present Tense: Photographs by JoAnn Verburg."** Through Nov. 5. ♦ **"Focus: Ellsworth Kelly."** This one-room exhibition provides a brief, snappy primer on the American abstract artist. A multipanel grid painting from 1951 in flat, bright hues shows Kelly breaking the conventions of Abstract Expressionism, treating color as figure and wall as ground. Curvilinear panels in orange, dark gray, and green, made three decades later, bounce with a palpable liveliness, set free from the grid. But then, all of Kelly's work tends toward the unbounded. "In a sense, what I've tried to capture," he once said, "is the reality of flux, to keep art an open, incomplete situation, to get at the rapture of seeing." Through Jan. 7, 2008. ♦ **"New Photography 2007: Tanyth Berkeley, Scott McFarland, Berni Searle."** Through Jan. 1, 2008. (Open Wednesdays through Mondays, 10:30 to 5:30, and Friday evenings until 8.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-423-3500)—**"Richard Prince: Spiritual America."** Through Jan. 8, 2008. (Open Saturdays through Wednesdays, 10 to 5:45, and Fridays, 10 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

Madison Ave. at 75th St. (800-944-8639)—Kara Walker, of the slavery-themed cut-paper silhouettes, isn't only the best artist of the nineteen-nineties generation of often overbearingly critical installation-makers. Her current retrospective, **"My Complement, My Enemy, My Oppressor, My Love,"** proves her to be a visual Rimbaudian poet—breathtakingly reckless in psychic adven-

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ture and insolently commanding in form. Coldly hot, the show's beautiful wall pieces, video projections, and sardonic drawings revel in funny, scary, dirty fantasies of sex and violence. Walker's Old South is here and now. Historical racism seems less her target than the framing device for a self-exploration that is fretted with nausea and impelled by infernal glee. Through Feb. 3, 2008. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6, and Fridays, 1 to 9.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM
200 Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—**"Infinite Island: Contemporary Caribbean Art."** Through Jan. 27, 2008. ♦ **"Brushed with Light: American Landscape Watercolors from the Collection."** Through Jan. 27, 2008. ♦ **"Global Feminisms Remix."** Through Feb. 3, 2008. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5, and Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
Central Park W. at 79th St. (212-769-5100)—**"Mythic Creatures: Dragons, Unicorns, and Mermaids."** Through Jan. 6, 2008. ♦ For the next eight months, around five hundred specimens will flit through the Butterfly Conservatory, a pocket-size hothouse planted with orchids and other rain-forest flora. Through May 26, 2008. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45.)

FRICK COLLECTION
1 E. 70th St. (212-288-0700)—**"Gabriel de Saint-Aubin (1724-1780)."** Through Jan. 27, 2008. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6, and Sundays, 11 to 5.)

JEWISH MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 92nd St. (212-423-3200)—**"Camille Pissarro: Impressions of City and Country."** Through Feb. 3, 2008. ♦ **"From The New Yorker to Shrek: The Art of William Steig."** Opens Nov. 4. (Open Saturdays through Wednesdays, 11 to 5:45, and Thursdays, 11 to 8.)

NEUE GALERIE
1048 Fifth Ave., at 86th St. (212-628-6200)—Gustav Klimt (1862-1918) dismissed the idea of self-portraiture, saying, "I am less interested in myself as a subject for a painting than I am in other people, above all women." One gets a bit of both in **"Gustav Klimt: The Ronald S. Lauder and Serge Sabarsky Collections."** A selection of photographs show the hulking artist, often swathed in a voluminous smock. In addition, his studio has been re-created as it was in 1912, complete with furnishings by Josef Hoffmann. Klimt was right, though: his women are the real draw, the subject here of a handful of paintings, and more than a hundred works on paper. His calligraphic line turned easily to the sensual; even without the gold leaf and jewel-colored paint, one could never call him austere. The studies for familiar works are perhaps the greatest pleasure, then, revealing the discipline behind the decadence. Through June 30, 2008. (Open Thursdays, and Saturdays through Mondays, 11 to 6, and Fridays, 11 to 9.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

Galleries are usually open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6; please call the gallery for exact hours.

FRANCIS ALŸS
The artist has collected almost three hundred portraits of St. Fabiola, most based on a lost original, painted by Jean-Jacques Henner in 1885. Selections hang on dark-panelled walls at the Hispanic Society of America, or are laid out on tables in a project organized by the Dia Art Foundation. Through April 6, 2008. (613 W. 155th St. 212-926-2234.)

WILLIAM HENRY FOX TALBOT
The British scholar and scientist, who patented the paper-negative photographic process that produced the remarkable calotypes currently on view at the Met, used his 1841 invention to document a wide range of mostly ordinary subjects. Though revelatory in their time, the results can appear a bit dry on first viewing, but look again. Pedestrian studies of glass, china, or silver objects arranged on shelves have a simplicity that, like Atget's, is strikingly modern. His picture of Nelson's Column, under construction in Trafalgar Square, retains the excitement of a view seen for the first time. Through Nov. 9. (Kraus, 962 Park Ave, at 82nd St. 212-794-2064.)

H. C. WESTERMANN
The fabulously eccentric maker of thumping, meticulously crafted, Surrealistic/Expressionistic wooden sculpture, who died in 1981, at age fifty-eight, seems destined for perpetual periodic rediscovery. Here, "Swingin' Red King," a giant figure in stacked and enamelled pine molding, presides over one-off marvels including the boxed, sinister "Death Ship of No Port with a List." Westermann saw traumatic service as a Marine in the Second World War and reënlisted for the Korean War to find out, he said, "if I was still a coward—I was!" Antic anguish is his song. Through Nov. 3. (Zwirner & Wirth, 32 E. 69th St. 212-517-8677.)

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

SHIRLEY KANEDA
These highly stylized paintings perform an interesting trick: their surfaces appear to be liquid. Hard outlines create wavy patterns; concentric circles suggest pooling. But Kaneda, long an adept of abstraction, seems to have lost her exuberance. Her latest paintings are meticulously composed, but some of the effects (psychedelic fading, textured surfaces) tip the scales too far toward decoration. Greens are nicely set off by browns; lavender by chartreuse. Water morphs into elegant wood grain. If anything, it's a little too tasteful. Through Nov. 3. (Danese, 535 W. 24th St. 212-223-2227.)

RINKO KAWAUCHI
With fifteen large color photographs and a video loop, this young Japanese artist continues to explore the ephemeral, the ineffable, and the mundane. Her subjects—a baby at his mother's breast, an old woman's clasped hands, a gull in flight, a drop of water on a broad green leaf—suggest an almost naïve sense of wonder, but she couples that with a sophisticated instinct for the photographic image at its most elemental. If this show is somewhat less satisfying than her previous exhibitions here, it's only because the work's wide, random range feels constricted by the artist's desire to make a statement about life and death. Through Nov. 10. (Cohan and Leslie, 138 Tenth Ave., at 18th St. 212-206-8710.)

KARIN SANDER
Mail art is typically intimate, an exchange of handmade in-jokes between friends. Putting an austerely globalist spin on the genre, the German Conceptualist bought prefab canvases and shipped them, unwrapped and blank (save for shipping labels on the back), from various international locations (Berlin, Bonn, Helsinki) to her gallery. The result is abstraction by happenstance. Blue, green, black, and white plastic straps crisscross into grids, offset by gestural-looking stains and hard-edged bar codes. There's a giant X on one large tondo, where the stretcher bars abraded the canvas en route. Priority and airmail stickers grace some like readymade signatures. Through Nov. 3. (D'Amelio Terras, 525 W. 22nd St. 212-352-9460.)

ALLAN TANNENBAUM
A rock-and-roll photographer needs nerve, stamina, and access, and Tannenbaum, who covered the downtown scene for the *Soho Weekly News* in the seventies and early eighties, had all three. Nearly half of this show is devoted to photographs of John Lennon and Yoko Ono made in 1980, shortly before Lennon was killed. No matter how poignant and intimate that work, it's blown out of the gallery by Tannenbaum's pictures of Grace Jones, Patti Smith, Iggy Pop, and other iconic rockers in their photogenic prime. The melting pot of seventies celebrity culture also provided him with some unlikely combinations,

CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK
A BOY'S BEST FRIEND

The films of Louis Malle, who died in 1995, are ripe for reassessment, none more so than "Murmur of the Heart," which shows at Walter Reade on Nov. 1 in the "Young Friends of Film" series. The setting is Dijon in 1954, at the time of the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu, and Malle's portrait of bourgeois propriety, already frayed by sexual adventure and political cynicism, is drawn with a fond and silvery wit. The hero is fifteen-year-old Laurent (Benoît Ferreux), schooled in adult pleasures by his older brothers, who take him to a brothel, and devoted to his luscious Italian mother (Leá Massari); it is the outcome of that devotion which stirred such controversy on the film's release, in 1971. It could probably not be made today, since what Malle offers as a tender rite of passage—the final shot rings with untraumatized laughter—would now be construed as child abuse, and the scene where Laurent lays out his mother's underclothes to the sound of jazz (the whole film is an homage to Parker, Bechet, and Gillespie) may be the coolest Oedipal riff ever devised. Complex? What complex?

—*Anthony Lane*

none more alarming than Halston, Steve Rubell, and Roy Cohn on a couch at Studio 54. Through Nov. 3. (Kasher, 521 W. 23rd St. 212-966-3978.)

Short List

ALIGHIERO E BOETTI: Gladstone, 515 W. 24th St. 212-206-9300. Through Nov. 24. **FOLKERT DE JONG:** Cohan, 533 W. 26th St. 212-714-9500. Through Nov. 24. **MILTON ROGOVIN:** Danziger, 521 W. 26th St. 212-629-6778. Through Nov. 24. **KARA WALKER:** Sikkema Jenkins & Co., 530 W. 22nd St. 212-929-2262. Through Nov. 21.

DANCE

AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE
It's Twyla Tharp week at City Center, with not one but two of her pieces: "Sinatra Suite," revived last year, and the company's première of "Baker's Dozen," a graceful ballroom fantasy from 1979. Herman Cornejo shows his stuff in both "Sinatra Suite" (Nov. 3 at 2) and Balanchine's bravura Verdi ballet "Ballo della Regina" (Nov. 4 at 1:30). Agnes de Mille's ballet drama "Fall River Legend," based on the 1892 story of the Lizzie Borden murders, offers a plum acting role in Lizzie, who will be danced this season by Julie Kent, Gillian Murphy, and Michele Wiles. ♦ Oct. 31 at 7:30: "The Leaves Are Fading," "Meadow," and "From Here On Out." ♦ Nov. 1 at 7:30: "From Here On Out," "C. to C. (Close to Chuck)," and "Fall River Legend." ♦ Nov. 2 at 8: "Baker's Dozen," "Sinatra Suite," "Meadow," and "Fall River Legend." ♦ Nov. 3 at 2: "Baker's Dozen," "Sinatra Suite," "The Leaves Are Fading," and "From Here On Out." ♦ Nov. 3 at 8: "Ballo della Regina," "Baker's Dozen," "Sinatra Suite," and "Fall River Legend." ♦ Nov. 4 at 1:30: "Ballo della Regina," "From Here On Out," and "Fall River Legend." ♦ Nov. 4 at 7: "Baker's Dozen," "Sinatra Suite," "C. to C. (Close to Chuck)," and "Fall River Legend." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212.)

ELISA MONTE DANCE
This year's run at the Joyce includes the ritualistic ensemble piece "Pigs and Fishes," the sensual duet "Treading," and the première of "Slope of Enlightenment," a study of resilience. (175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 212-242-0800. Oct. 30-31 at 7:30, Nov. 1-3 at 8, and Nov. 4 at 2 and 7:30.)

DAVID NEUMANN/ADVANCED BEGINNER GROUP
Neumann's "Feedforward" toys with the analogy between dance and sports. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 212-924-0077. Oct. 30-Nov. 3 at 7:30.)

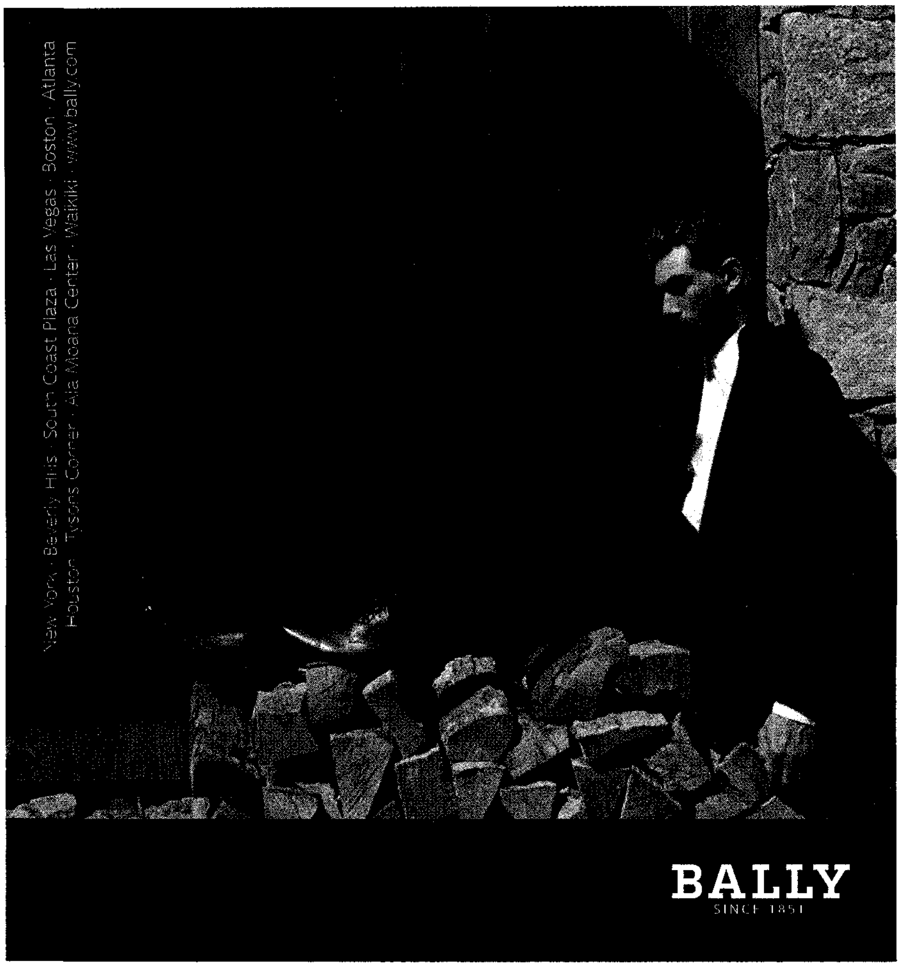
LHOTÁKOVÁ & SOUKUP COMPANY
The Czech troupe introduces its brand of documentary-style dance theatre to New York. In "Beethoven Live," ten young people who lived in Prague during the work's creation are scrutinized and abstracted; their disappearing youth gives the dance its theme. (P.S. 122, at 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 212-352-3101. Oct. 30-Nov. 3 at 8.)

"WHAT IF SAORI HAD A PARTY?"
The composer John Moran teams up with the charismatic dancer Saori Tsukada for a look at the interplay between Japanese and American culture. (P.S. 122, at 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 212-352-3101. Oct. 30-Nov. 3 at 8:30 and Nov. 4 at 6:30.)

JOHN JASPERSE COMPANY
In "Misuse Liable to Prosecution," Jasperse confronts the financial constraints usually faced by dancemakers by imposing a constraint of his own: none of the production's physical objects have been bought. Instead, the work attempts to expose the beauty in junk and the aesthetics of trash, including movement that another choreographer might discard. Likewise, Zeena Parkins's score coaxes music from found objects, as well as from her electric harp and a crew of bagpipers. (BAM's Harvey Theatre, 651 Fulton St. 718-636-4100. Oct. 31-Nov. 3 at 7:30.)

ICE THEATRE OF NEW YORK
This isn't the Ice Capades or a Disney show; this company is serious about plumbing the aesthetic and emotional possibilities of dance on ice. At the

RACHEL DOMM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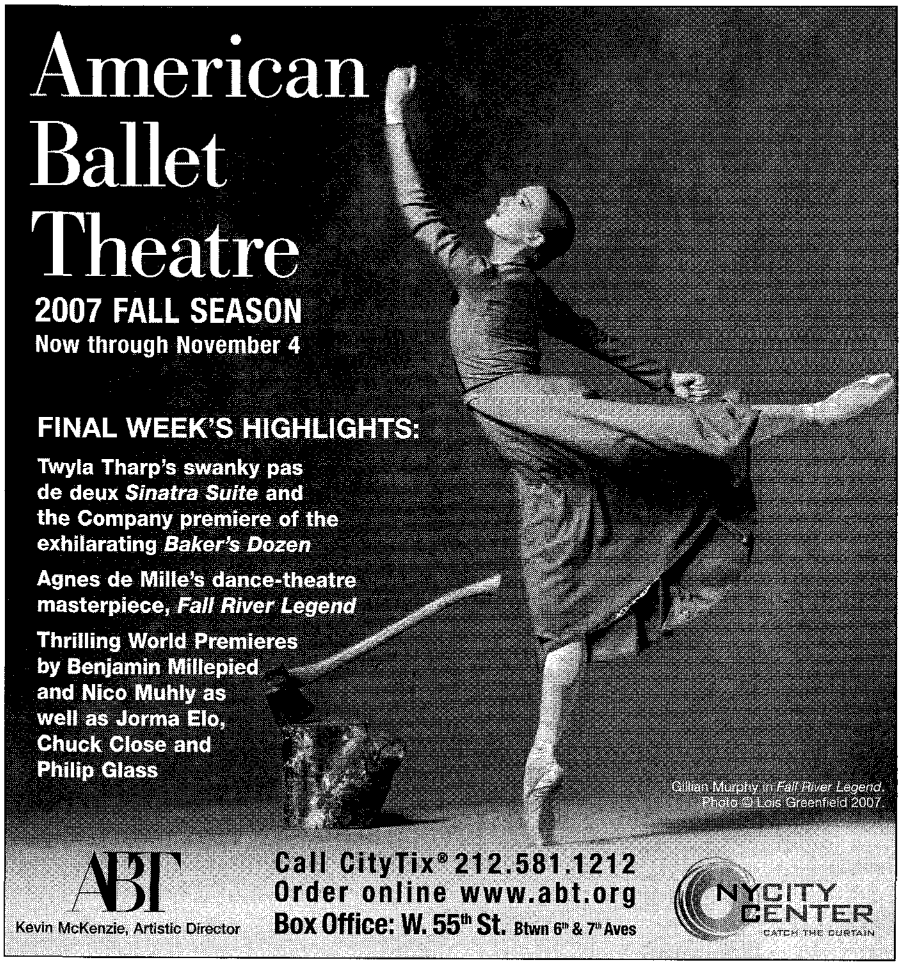
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Now through November 4

FINAL WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS:

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Agnes de Mille's dance-theatre masterpiece, *Fall River Legend*

Thrilling World Premieres by Benjamin Millepied and Nico Muhly as well as Jorma Elo, Chuck Close and Philip Glass

Gillian Murphy in *Fall River Legend*.
Photo © Lois Greenfield 2007.

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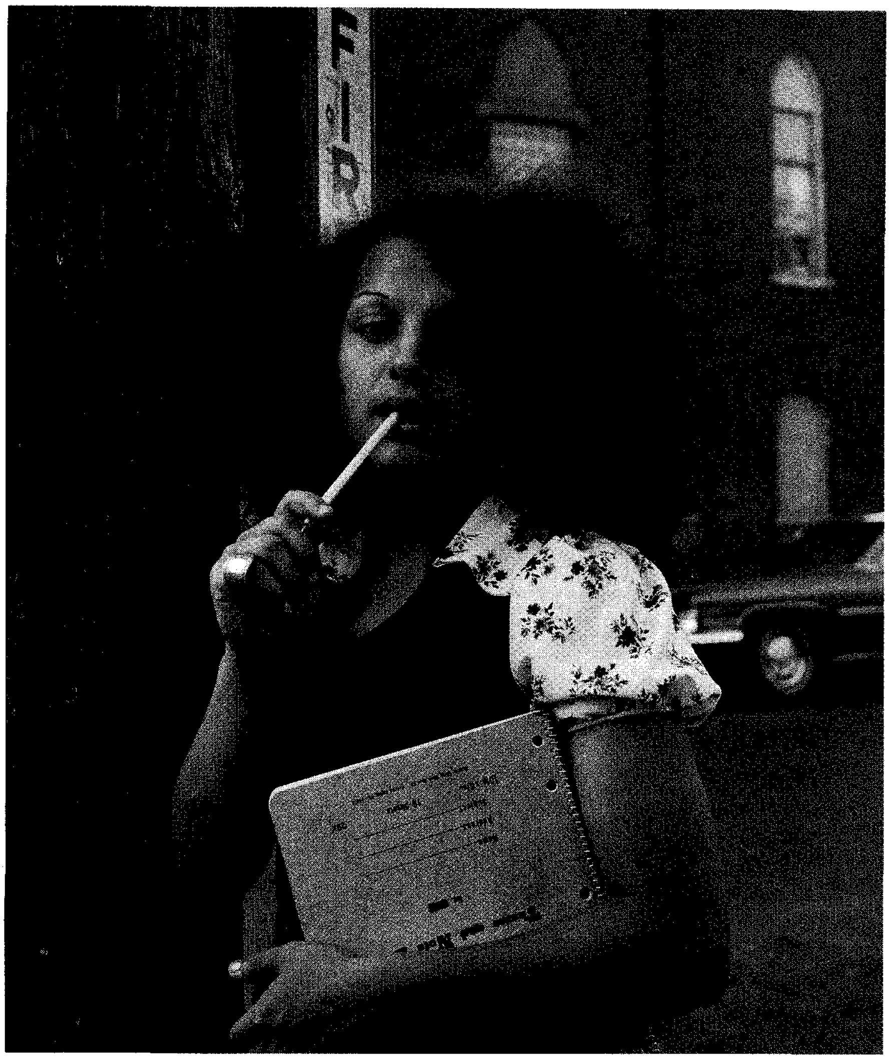

A photograph from Milton Rogovin's exhibition "Buffalo," currently at Danziger.

Sky Rink at Chelsea Piers, they present a flamenco suite, a fluid quartet by Douglas Webster set to Philip Glass, and a new work by the company's star and co-artistic director, David Liu. But the most striking work is also the oldest: Twyla Tharp's "After All," a stunning solo made for the Olympic skater John Curry in 1976. (23rd St. at Twelfth Ave. 212-929-5811. Nov. 1-3 at 7.)

ASHLEIGH LEITE

For "Crawl Space," the former Stephen Petronio dancer has lined the aisles of Danspace's church with closed-circuit monitors. Through long, blacked-out stretches, these monitors provide the only visuals—infrared images of the performance. Otherwise, there's a choice between watching the video feed or the sextet of women directly, as they inch along the ground like slugs, interminably, and catapult through complex, whiplash sequences as though someone has hit the fast-forward button. The violence peaks when, again and again, they drag each other across the floor. (St. Mark's In-the-Bowery, Second Ave. at 10th St. 212-674-8194. Nov. 1-3 at 8:30.)

WHIRLING DERVISHES OF TURKEY

The Galata Mevlevi order in Istanbul practices a form of ritual prayer that incorporates dancing (or, actually, whirling) to the accompaniment of classical Turkish music and sung Rumi verses. The dance begins slowly, meditatively, and gradually accelerates, as the dancers' white skirts billow, and the celebrants raise one hand to the sky. This is dance as spiritual enlightenment, not the usual concert fare, but the combined effect of the trancelike movement, percussion, and melismatic melodies can be thrilling. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 212-545-7536. Nov. 3 at 8.)

GEORGIAN STATE DANCE COMPANY

This company performs a program of Georgian dances that is extraordinary in sophistication and range, including court ensembles and subtle partnered dances, as well as warlike romps—folk dancing on a virtuoso level. (Lehman Center, 250 Bedford Park Blvd., the Bronx. 718-960-8833. Nov. 4 at 4.)

"CAST NO SHADOW"

The British filmmaker Isaac Julien and the choreographer Russell Maliphant boldly go where many have failed, pitting live dance against three of Julien's visually rich films, spread across three screens. "Fantôme Afrique" is the most straightforward piece, an earth-toned travelogue set in Burkina Faso. During "True North," based on Matthew Henson's journey to the North Pole, the dancers weave around and behind the screens and their Arctic images. "Small Boats," which situates the story of Africans migrating to Europe in picturesque Sicily, is the most successfully integrated segment, merging its elements to stunning effect. (BAM's Harvey Theatre, 651 Fulton St. 718-636-4100. Nov. 6 at 7:30. Through Nov. 10.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC
OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA

The Met's new production of **"Macbeth"** plays in a space ringed with barren trees, where Macbeth (the stylish Željko Lučić) battles with overwhelming forces. The Weird Sisters—a coven of bag ladies, opening their purses Mary Poppins-style to spin Macbeth's fate—mislead him; Lady Macbeth—his oversexed wife—bullies him. But the biggest bruising comes from the vagaries of Adrian Noble's production, which never cohere to support Verdi's sympathetic portrayal of the opera's beleaguered hero. Still, Maria Guleghina, the Lady Macbeth, erupts with volcanic sound, and the tenors Dimitri Pittas and Russell Thomas, as Macduff and Malcolm, offer exhilarating vocal heroics; James Levine conducts. (Oct. 31 and Nov. 3 at 8.) ♦ Julie Taymor's relentlessly entertaining, pageant-like 2004 production of **"Die Zauberflöte,"** with Diana Damrau, Anna-Kristiina Kaappola, Eric Cutler, and Stéphane Degout featured in the cast; Kirill Petrenko. (Nov. 1 and Nov. 6 at 8.) ♦ **"Aida,"** with Angela M. Brown (a formidable purveyor of the title role), Olga Borodina, Marco Berti, Mark Delavan, and Vitalij Kowaljow; Kazushi Ono. (Nov. 2 at 7:30.) ♦ With Luciana D'Intino replacing Borodina in the role of Amneris. (Nov. 5 at 7:30.) ♦ In her most recent Met performances in the title role of **"La Traviata,"** Renée Fleming created a warmly sympathetic character supported by vocalism that was relatively free of the stylistic idiosyncrasies that have slipped into her singing in recent years. She returns, supported by a solid in-house cast that features Matthew Polenzani and Dwayne Croft; the reliable Marco Armiliato is in the pit. (Nov. 3 at 1:30.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 212-362-6000.)

NEW YORK CITY OPERA

Cassandre Berthon is making her City Opera début in the title role of **"Cendrillon,"** Massenet's luscious treatment of the Cinderella tale. The new production, from Opéra de Montréal, also features débuts from Katherine Jolly, Frédéric Antoun, and Eugene Brancoveanu, joined by the beloved veteran Joyce Castle; George Manahan conducts. (Nov. 1 at 8 and Nov. 3 at 1:30.) ♦ The final performance of Handel's **"Agrippina,"** with Nelly Miricioiu, Heidi Stober, Jennifer Rivera, David Walker, David Korn, Marco Nisticò, and João Fernandes; Ransom Wilson. (Nov. 2 at 8.) ♦ **"Carmen,"** with Beth Clayton, Jennifer Black, Scott Piper, and Carlos Archuleta; Joseph Rescigno. (Nov. 3 at 8.) ♦ Fifty years after its première at the Metropolitan Opera—in a legendary production that featured Eleanor Steber—Samuel Barber's romantic **"Vanessa,"** a love-triangle story set in an aristocratic northern milieu loosely inspired by Isak Dinesen's "Seven Gothic Tales," returns to Lincoln Center. City Opera's Lauren Flanigan, the kind of singer who welcomes a challenge, will offer a Vanessa who is gritty as well as glorious. Katharine Goeldner sings the role of Erika, Ryan MacPherson is her faithless suitor, Anatol, and the great Rosalind Elias—Barber's first Erika—is the Old Baroness; Anne Manson. (Nov. 4 at 1:30 and Nov. 6 at 7:30.) (New York State Theatre. 212-721-6500.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC

The Russian conductor Semyon Bychkov makes a return visit to the orchestra along with two of his favorite collaborators, the duo-pianists Katia and Marielle Labèque. In a classic Franco-Slavic program, Rachmaninoff's ever-popular Symphony No. 2 in E Minor shares the program with Henri Dutilleux's "Métaboles" and Martinů's Concerto for Two Pianos. (Nov. 1 at 7:30, Nov. 2 at 11 A.M., and Nov. 3 at 8.) ♦ Bychkov repeats the Rachmaninoff in a Saturday-matinée program that begins with a performance of Schumann's Piano Quintet, offered by several of the Philharmonic's leading string players and the pianist Benjamin Hochman. (Nov. 3 at 2.) (Avery Fisher Hall. 212-875-5656.)

ST. PETERSBURG PHILHARMONIC

Prokofiev is the mainstay of the Carnegie Hall concerts by Yuri Temirkanov and his forceful yet elegant orchestra. Oct. 31 at 8: Nelson Freire is the guest for a performance of Schumann's Piano Concerto in a program that begins with the Act III Entr'acte from Schubert's "Rosamunde" and concludes with a suite from Prokofiev's "Romeo and Juliet" ballet. ♦ Nov. 1 at 8: The Russian master's cantata "Alexander Nevsky" (based on his music for the Eisenstein film), featuring Gotham's own Dessoff Symphonic Choir, dominates the final concert, preceded by Georgy Sviridov's "Small Triptych" and Mussorgsky's "Songs and Dances of Death" (with the mezzo-soprano Larissa Diadkova). (212-247-7800.)

RIVERSIDE SYMPHONY
George Rothman's intrepid orchestra, admired for its daring programs, offers Beethoven's Eighth Symphony as the capstone of a concert that begins with two Latin-American works: the world première of Ricardo Zohn-Muldoon's "Silueta Como Sirena" and a performance of Villa-Lobos's Bachianas Brasileiras No. 1, both featuring the Mexican singer and instrumentalist Alfredo Sánchez. (New York Society for Ethical Culture, Central Park W. at 64th St. 212-864-4197. Nov. 2 at 7:30.)

RECITALS

"CHAMBER MUSIC AT THE Y"
The Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio teams up with some excellent younger musicians—the Miami String Quartet—for two evenings of music by Fauré, Debussy, Ravel (the Piano Trio), and Chausson (the Concerto for Violin, Piano, and String Quartet). (Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 212-415-5500. Oct. 30-31 at 8.)

"REFLECTIONS: STORIED LANDSCAPES"
The Rubin Museum of Art, an important repository for Himalayan art works, invites the violinist Gil Morgenstern (and some fine colleagues) to perform string quartets by Dvořák (the "American"), Bright Sheng, and Osvaldo Golijov in conjunction with its exhibition on the arts and culture of the Bon religion of Tibet. (150 W. 17th St. 212-620-5000. Oct. 31 at 7; a gallery tour precedes the concert.)

JORDI SAVALL
This magnificent Catalan musician has done for the viola da gamba what Landowska did for the harpsichord, bringing it into the spotlight as only a charismatic virtuoso can. He offers works by Tobias Hume and Simon Ives in a concert at Carnegie's Weill Recital Hall. (212-247-7800. Oct. 31 at 7:30.)

ANDREW MANZE AND RICHARD EGARR
The champion of the Baroque violin and his superb accompanist offer sonatas for violin and piano not only by Bach and Mozart but also by Schubert (the "Duo" in A Major) and Hubert Parry. (Zankel Hall. 212-247-7800. Nov. 1 at 7:30.)

NORTH RIVER MUSIC SERIES: DAVID LEISNER
The admired guitarist and composer (with friends) offers a mini-retrospective of his works, including two world premières. (Renee Weiler Concert Hall, 46 Barrow St. Nov. 1 at 8. Tickets at the door.)

ZEHETMAIR QUARTET
Schumann's music, in its high-Romantic fervor, is a touchstone for the violinist Thomas Zehetmair's ensemble, which plays its programs from memory. The String Quartet in A Minor rounds off a program that also features quartets by Mozart and Hindemith (No. 4). (Zankel Hall. 212-247-7800. Nov. 2 at 7:30.)

BARGEMUSIC
Not since Charles Ives has a major American composer devoted himself as intensely to writing sonatas for violin and piano as William Bolcom, who has written four of them (premièred by such virtuosos as Sergiu Luca and Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg). The Lewin-Muresanu Duo offers all four in a concert at the floating chamber-music series. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-2083. Nov. 2 at 8. For full listing, see www.bargemusic.org.)

"BERLIN: SYMPHONY OF A CITY"
The classical-music segment of Carnegie Hall's big "Berlin in Lights" festival begins with a presentation of Walther Ruttmann's 1927 film portrait of the city, featuring a score (by Edmund Meisel) performed by a group that includes the pianist Stephen Gosling and the percussionist Eric Poland. (Zankel Hall. 212-247-7800. Nov. 3 at 5 and 7:30.)

MURRAY PERAHIA
The reserved and revered pianist, never the adventurous sort, has become a mandarin of the keyboard, delivering porcelain-perfect renderings of the standard repertoire. The program for his upcoming Carnegie Hall recital features works by Bach, Beethoven (the "Pastoral" Sonata), Brahms (the Six Pieces, Op. 118), and Chopin. (212-247-7800. Nov. 3 at 8.)

MARC-ANDRÉ HAMELIN
Performances of sonatas by Haydn (No. 32 in B Minor) and Chopin as well as of Debussy's "Préludes" (Book II), offered by the dazzling Canadian pianist. (Rose Theatre, Broadway at 60th St. 212-721-6500. Nov. 4 at 5.)

AUSTRIAN CULTURAL FORUM
The forum's concert series devoted to (mostly Viennese) modern music ends with a tantalizing novelty: Alexander Zemlinsky's four-hand piano arrangement of Beethoven's opera, "Fidelio," in a performance offered by the pianists Dennis Russell Davies and Maki Namekawa. (11 E. 52nd St. Nov. 5 at 7:30. For free tickets, which are required, call 212-319-5300; for full listing, see www.acfny.org.)

MOVIES OPENING

AMERICAN GANGSTER
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening Nov. 2. (In wide release.)

BEE MOVIE
An animated comedy, directed by Steve Hickner and Simon J. Smith, about a bee who wants to do more in life than make honey. With the voices of Jerry Seinfeld, Renée Zellweger, and Matthew Broderick. Opening Nov. 2. (In wide release.)

DARFUR NOW
A documentary, directed by Ted Braun, about the humanitarian crisis in Sudan. Opening Nov. 2. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

DIVA
A revival of the 1981 romantic thriller by Jean-Jacques Beineix, about an American opera singer in Paris (Wilhelmenia Fernandez) who befriends a fan who is being pursued by gangsters. In French. Opening Nov. 2. (Film Forum.)

FAT GIRLS
Ash Christian directed this high-school drama, about a gay boy and an obese girl who become best friends. Opening Nov. 2. (Quad Cinema.)

JOE STRUMMER: THE FUTURE IS UNWRITTEN
Reviewed below in Now Playing. Opening Nov. 2. (IFC Center.)

MARTIAN CHILD
Reviewed below in Now Playing. Opening Nov. 2. (In wide release.)

NOW PLAYING

BEFORE THE DEVIL KNOWS YOU'RE DEAD
In Sidney Lumet's furious and entertaining little morality play, two men hard up for cash—Andy (Philip Seymour Hoffman), a payroll manager at a Manhattan real-estate company, and his not very bright kid brother, Hank (Ethan Hawke)—decide to knock over their parents' jewelry store in Westchester, and everything goes wrong. The movie, written by Kelly Masterson, has an unusual construction: it reaches a climactic moment, then jumps back a few days to lay out the story from the point of view of one character or another. The fractured time scheme brings out the unsurprising but still enlightening lesson that crime should be left to the professionals, and that greed humbles smart-asses like Andy, who think they're invulnerable. If the material had been underplayed, or done as cool, sly satire, its moral and psychological patterns would have seemed obvious and trite. But the excitable Lumet, now eighty-three, pitches the performances as high as he can, and this feels right. He's made an old man's malicious joke about the universality of folly. With Albert Finney as the boys' frightening dad.—*David Denby* (Reviewed in our issue of 10/29/07.) (In wide release.)

CONTROL
Given the sound and the fury that emanated from Joy Division, the British rock band of the late nineteen-seventies, you might expect that a movie about their rise to fame and the despairing fall of their lead singer, Ian Curtis (Sam Riley), would be an unwatchable affair. But somehow Anton Corbijn's film summons zest, gloomy humor, and surprising tenderness as it recounts the tale of its hero in the

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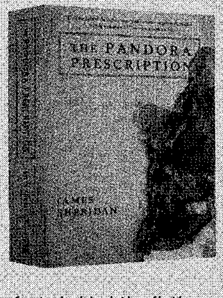

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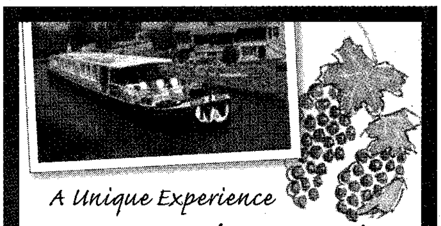

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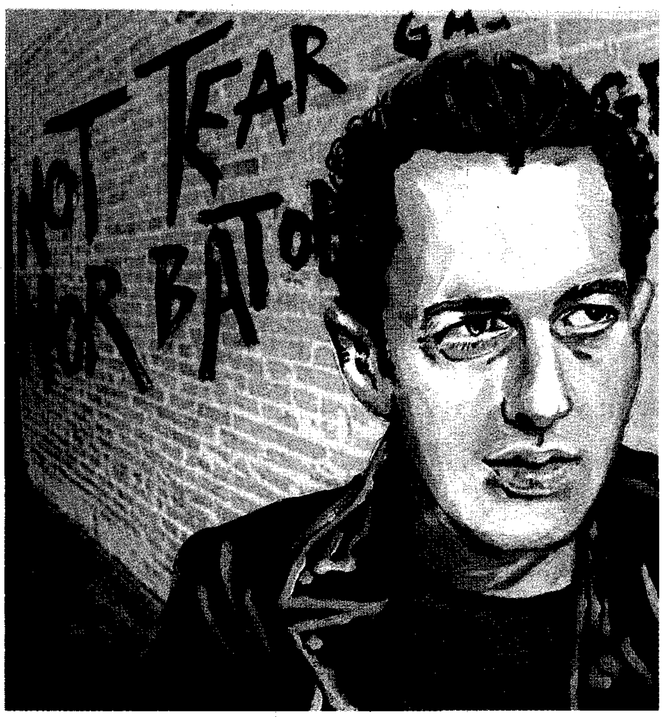
North of England: his adolescence (which was steeped in David Bowie), his early marriage to a local girl named Deborah (Samantha Morton), the record contracts, and the terror of his epileptic fits. The movie refuses to mythologize Curtis; indeed, the tearing of his heart between the loyal Deborah and a beautiful Belgian fan (Alexandra Maria Lara) feels like a universal plight. Still, once Riley takes the microphone, we realize all too vividly what the fuss was about, and how the myth began. In glorious black-and-white.—*Anthony Lane* (10/15/07) (Film Forum.)

DAN IN REAL LIFE
Steve Carell and Juliette Binoche bring life to this gently comic drama, directed by Peter Hedges ("Pieces of April"). Dan (Carell) is a moralistic newspaper columnist, a widower, and a strict but beleaguered father of three daughters, two of them teen-agers. When he takes them to visit his large extended family at his parents' vacation home, he meets Marie (a wonderfully loose Binoche), who happens to be dating his brother (Dane Cook). Amidst the seemingly endless family activities, Dan falls in love with Marie, his focus interrupted only by a brief stint with a neighbor's feisty, high-achieving daughter (the fantastic Emily Blunt). The impressive cast features topnotch actors—including Dianne Wiest, John Mahoney, Alison Pill, and Norbert Leo Butz—who are limited by their one-dimensional roles, and Hedges offers disappointingly simplistic resolutions for every problem. But for fans of Carell and Binoche, who are paired with some success here, the film may prove a guilty pleasure.—*Shauna Lyon* (In wide release.)

THE DARJEELING LIMITED
The new Wes Anderson film shows that his fixation on families, and on the ties that bind them, continues unabated. Three brothers, played by Adrien Brody, Jason Schwartzman, and Owen Wilson, meet up on a slow train rattling across India. They are mourning the death of their father, planning a vague pilgrimage to their mother (Anjelica Huston), who has herself moved to Asia, and trying to repair their fellowship. The movie steams with minor resentments and misunderstandings that slowly evaporate in the warm-colored, calmative surroundings of an unfamiliar land. It is easy to be exasperated by the brothers' pettiness, but Anderson is one of the few contemporary directors with the nerve to insist that the blandishments of style—in his case, stately tracking shots, sudden romantic songs, and twitchy running gags—can lend form and grace to even the most discontented lives. With a fine opening cameo from Bill Murray, which leaves you wanting more.—*A.L.* (10/15/07) (In wide release.)

GONE BABY GONE
In his début film as a feature director, Ben Affleck turns to the gloomy streets of working-class Dorchester. A baby girl belonging to the world's worst mother (Amy Ryan) gets snatched, and a local tough kid who has become a private investigator (Casey Affleck), accompanied by his girlfriend (Michelle Monaghan), look for the child in some of the city's most surly locations. The movie turns into a complicated thriller involving the mother's disapproving family and some very emotional Boston policemen who are obsessed with protecting children. At times, the genre conventions (the material comes out of an early Dennis Lehane thriller) are at odds with the movie's authentic, lived-in look, but Affleck, as a director, has no fear of gazing into the abyss, and he gets some very good actors to follow him. With Morgan Freeman and Ed Harris at his feverish best.—*D.D.* (10/29/07) (In wide release.)

JIMMY CARTER MAN FROM PLAINS
The director Jonathan Demme gets unfettered access to former President Jimmy Carter on his tour for his controversial book "Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid," which has been seen by many as a pro-Palestinian, anti-Israeli look at the Middle East crisis. The tour gives Demme a perfect opportunity to record Carter's wide-ranging observations on the American cultural landscape. There are no polemics here, and although the storm around Carter's book is given room to be aired, Demme is more concerned with showing the man's undeniable warmth and intelligence. The documentary offers a healthy, stimulating view of political opinion, but its most affecting elements are the small moments that Demme captures—a frail Carter, in the company of Secret Service agents, carrying his own bags into a hotel, or a short conversation that Carter has with a little girl whose name reminds him of his favorite poet. Carter's total immersion in his work, at the age of eighty-two, and his unflagging need to make a difference give the film an admirable power.—*Bruce Diones* (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)



"Joe Strummer: The Future Is Unwritten" opens Nov. 2.

GIBB SLIFE

JOE STRUMMER:
THE FUTURE IS UNWRITTEN
In the late seventies and early eighties, Joe Strummer, one of the leaders of the Clash, wrote and performed some of the most mercurial rock-and-roll songs ever heard. The director Julian Temple, Strummer's friend, brings together home movies, audio recordings, and incendiary performances in a documentary portrait of one of music's true anarchic geniuses. Strummer, who died of a heart ailment in 2002, at the age of fifty, was the son of an English diplomat and travelled extensively throughout his childhood. His exposure to a world of music as well as to the varied influences of his father's work would eventually be showcased in his aggressively committed, politically aware band. The tone of Temple's film is communal; many friends and collaborators reminisce around a bonfire, such as Strummer often relied on to bring friends and family together. And there's a bright, inspiring arc to his story: from Strummer's family's globe-trotting ways to his rebellious early years, through his volatile life with the Clash to his later drift into a solo career, Temple weaves together a film that is both heady and humble, entirely worthy of Strummer's spontaneous, astonishing music.—*B.D.* (IFC Center.)

LARS AND THE REAL GIRL
Ryan Gosling gives a beautifully understated performance as a socially phobic man who believes that a sex doll is his girlfriend. The film takes place in a wintry Midwestern town filled with the kindest people imaginable, and the director, Craig Gillespie, uses a Capra-esque shorthand to bring to life a story in which understanding and decency are idealized to fable-like proportions. As the townsfolk buy into the lead character's delusion and adopt the doll as one of their own (inviting it to parties, hiring it to do community service), the emotional directness of Nancy Oliver's screenplay gently tugs the film over the deeper, disturbing psychic troubles that lie beneath the surface. The result is ridiculous but effective.—*B.D.* (Angelika Film Center and Paris.)

LUST, CAUTION
The beautiful stone buildings and mahogany interiors of post-colonial Shanghai cast a heavy, voluptuous spell in Ang Lee's adaptation of Eileen Chang's story of sex and espionage in the city during the Second World War. Tang Wei, a former model and a prodigious young actress, plays a member of a political-theatre group that carries its playacting into active resistance to the Japanese occupation. Pretending to be a married sophisticate, the girl enters the circle of Mr. Yee (Tony Leung), a high-placed Chinese collaborator and nemesis of the resistance, and finds herself both attracted to and repelled by him. Lee's staging of the bruising erotic scenes is incomparably powerful, but the meetings and actions of the resistance (presumably under Communist Party discipline) are not very convincing. The movie dawdles and repeats itself unconscionably—it lacks drive and, except for the sex scenes, a tinge of wildness. Shot by Rodrigo Prieto on sets constructed in Shanghai. Wang Hui-Ling and James Schamus wrote the screenplay. In Mandarin.—*D.D.* (In wide release.)

MARTIAN CHILD
A touching, heartfelt, clever near-miss. The tale of David Gordon (John Cusack), a successful science-fiction writer and grieving widower who adopts Dennis (Bobby Coleman), a brilliant oddball, has enough emotional depth and integrity to make its flaws all the more obvious. As the title suggests, the solitary boy insists, disturbingly, that he is from Mars—and has the right sort of quirks to back the claim up. Coleman is the center of the film, and he is extraordinarily credible as a little genius. In his scenes with Cusack, the filial relationship grows plausibly and movingly, thanks to the perceptive eye of the director, Menno Meyjes, and the cinematographer, Robert Yeoman, one of the few who know how to keep a camera still. The screenplay, by Seth Bass and Jonathan Tolins, based on a novel by David Gerrold, offers heartwarming, tearjerking, stand-up-and-cheer moments that only a golem could resist, but Meyjes never conjures a world, inner or outer, so the result is just a string of effective scenes, an illustrated script rather than an experience. Nonetheless, a charming Martian dance, a memorable placement of M&M's, and several stunning missed connections suggest the heights that this tender drama could have scaled.—*Richard Brody* (In wide release.)

MEETING RESISTANCE
In this powerful, fascinating documentary, the journalists Molly Bingham and Steve Connors present a complex overview of the Iraqi resistance against the American military presence in Iraq. Playing like a superb television news special, the film, shot in 2003-04, shows interviews with several Iraqi resistance fighters (their identities are obscured for their protection), interspersed with intimate footage of neighborhood bombings and their aftermaths. The result is an acute demonstration of how differing ideologies have converged on one goal: to show the coalition forces that they are not wanted in Iraq. While some interviewees are self-proclaimed religious jihadists who value martyrdom above all, others explain that, although they are Sunni, they have Shia relatives in their extended family and, in any case, no loyalty to Saddam Hussein's Baath Party. A large number of combatants are not religious zealots but national-

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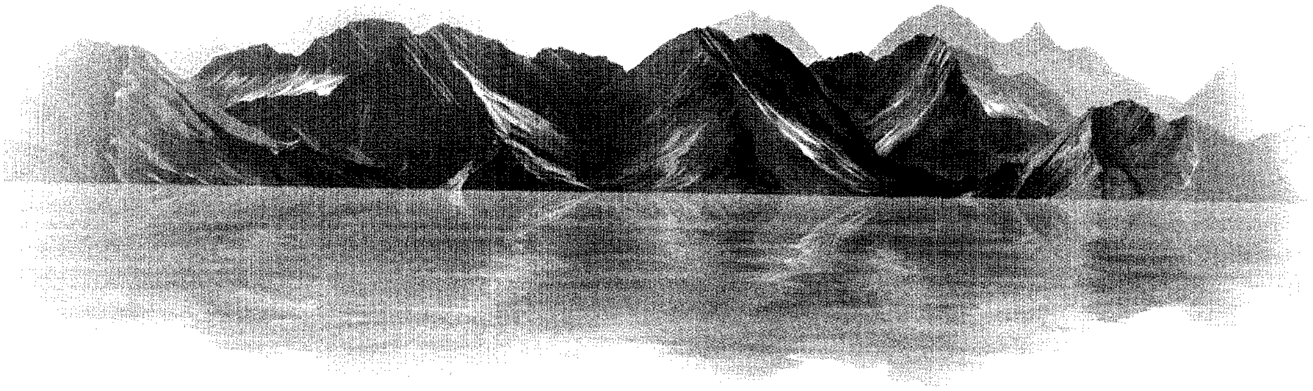

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CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK
BEYOND UTOPIA

JEROEN KOOLHAAS

Many kudos and criticisms have been directed at Tom Stoppard over his nearly fifty-year career—terribly inventive, too intellectual—yet few if any reviewers of his increasingly ambitious work have ever called him generous. But how else would one describe this largely self-educated man, whose passion for books, ideas, and biography constitutes what's thrilling about his work? Last season's Tony Award-winning trilogy, "The Coast of Utopia," was not only a lesson in how to put together an epic drama; without fear of being labelled pretentious, it gave audience members permission to care about history again. Stoppard's new drama, "Rock 'n' Roll" (at the Bernard B. Jacobs, starring Brian Cox, Rufus Sewell, and Sinéad Cusack), has elements of autobiography—its young protagonist, Jan, is, like the author himself, a Czech-born transplant living in England. But the play's excitement comes from Jan's interaction with the world around him; he is utterly porous to his surroundings and to the dreams he finds in reality.

—*Hilton Als*

ists who are attempting to overcome the shame they feel in the occupation by fighting for their dignity, their honor, their identity, and, ultimately, their country.—*S.L.* (Cinema Village.)

MICHAEL CLAYTON

A gabby, irresistibly entertaining New York thriller. Michael Clayton (George Clooney), a law-firm fixer of dubious ethics, is dispatched to rein in the firm's chief litigator (Tom Wilkinson), a high-strung guy who has discovered a document that incriminates one of the firm's clients and has responded by going off his meds and out of his mind. Michael, it turns out, is only slightly less disgusted by the dirty business than the litigator is, and the movie catches him during a period of four frantic days in which all the strains in his life are pushing him to the breaking point. The screenwriter Tony Gilroy both wrote and directed the movie, and he keeps the tension level high—too high at times; the movie needs to breathe more. Yet the inside-the-law-firm chatter and poker-table badinage come off superbly. Clooney, looking a little haggard, gives a lovely performance as a smart man who has a few too many scruples to be a winner. With Tilda Swinton and Sydney Pollack. Cinematography by Robert Elswit.—*D.D.* (10/8/07) (In wide release.)

RENDITION

It's interesting enough to hold your attention, but bad enough to make you despair of Hollywood's ability to confront a serious subject. An Egyptian-born chemical engineer (Omar Metwally) who has lived in the United States since he was fourteen and is married to an American (Reese Witherspoon) gets snatched and hooded by the C.I.A. as he returns to America from South Africa. He is rendered to an unspecified North African country for "interrogation"—right after it has suffered a terrorist attack—and a rescue operation gets under way. His wife prevails on her old boyfriend (Peter Sarsgaard), a senator's assistant, to make inquiries in Washington, while a young C.I.A. officer (Jake Gyllenhaal) watches the interrogation, which rapidly turns into torture, and suffers horrible doubts. The director, Gavin Hood, keeps several narrative lines going at once, but the moral and spiritual issues involved in America's use of torture almost get lost in a display of high-powered moviemaking. With good performances by Meryl Streep as the C.I.A.'s head of counter-terrorism and Igal Naor as the head of the secret police in the North African country. Written by Kelly Shane. Shot partly in Morocco.—*D.D.* (In wide release.)

SEDUCED AND ABANDONED

A lusty, vital satire of Sicilian mores—and a glory of Italian movie comedy. The wonderful Stefania Sandrelli plays a precocious but still innocent fifteen-year-old who loses her virginity to her sister's fiancé (Aldo Puglisi). He is absurdly creepy: a sexual snake in a grassless, hot, dusty town. Only partly a sex comedy, the film is mostly a parody of Sicilian propriety as embodied by Sandrelli's puffed-up quarry-owner father (Saro Urzi, who won Best Actor at Cannes). He instigates a frenzy of face-saving tactics, from a botched assassination to a kidnapping. What Diane Keaton's character in "The Godfather Part II" called "this Sicilian thing"—family honor and vendettas—here gets a coiling, farcical treatment. The movie is a masterpiece of mock verismo; everything accelerates into high-octane opera buffa. Pietro Germi directs with such deftness that he gets mileage from small laughs and can afford to tread lightly on big ones—like Puglisi's whining "I want a chaste wife!" In Italian.—*Michael Sragow* (Film Forum; Nov. 2-4.)

SHADOWS OF FORGOTTEN ANCESTORS

For his first feature, from 1964, the Armenian director Sergei Paradjanov infused a nineteenth-century Ukrainian folktale with wild flights of fancy and a deep vein of tradition, turning this story of a rustic Romeo-and-Juliet-like couple into both an ethnographic fiction and an ecstatic, pantheistic rhapsody. The pre-credit sequence, in which a tree falls in a forest and the camera, perched on high, falls along with it toward its victim, foretells the audacious visual delirium that brings the story to life. Ivanko and Marishka meet as children when her father, a contemptuous grandee, kills his father, a simple peasant, after an argument in church. Defying his

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mother's curse on the girl's family, Ivanko meets Marishka in the open fields; they undress in a headlong dash for the river (as the camera dashes daringly with them), then discover their desire in a moment of stunned stillness—but a heavy price is exacted over time in surprising ways. Paradjanov tells the universal tale with quiet wonder and awesome frenzy, filling the screen with color and motion and adorning the soundtrack with cries and chants, horn calls and drumbeats, to evoke otherworldly mysteries and ineffable joys and agonies. In Ukrainian.—*R.B.* (BAM; Oct. 31-Nov. 6.)

WE OWN THE NIGHT
The new film by James Gray feels like a companion piece to "The Yards," his earlier, equally dark saga of crime and domestic discord in New York. Both films star Joaquin Phoenix and Mark Wahlberg; in the first film, they played best friends, and this time they're brothers—closer in blood but painfully divided by the course of their lives. Bobby (Phoenix) runs a night club, while Joseph (Wahlberg), following in the stern footsteps of their father (Robert Duvall), is a Brooklyn cop. When Bobby is asked to help entrap a Russian drug lord, he finds himself being pulled away from the good times (this is 1988) and back into his family, to the dismay of his girlfriend, Amada (Eva Mendes). The moral motion of the film is fairly simple—the return, and redemption, of a prodigal son—but Gray steeps his tale in murky complication, and the staging of every scene, be it downbeat or frantic, is so assured that you barely notice the implausibilities. (Bobby and Joseph, for instance, hardly look like brothers.) The rain-drenched car chase, halfway through, is reason enough to see the film.—*A.L.* (10/22/07) (In wide release.)

Also Playing

LAGERFELD CONFIDENTIAL: Film Forum. **SAW IV:** In wide release. **30 DAYS OF NIGHT:** In wide release. **WHY DID I GET MARRIED?:** In wide release.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES
32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (212-505-5181)—In revival. Oct. 31-Nov. 2 and Nov. 4-6 at 7 and 9 and Nov. 3 at 3:10, 5, 7, and 9: "3:10 to Yuma" (1957, Delmer Daves). ♦ "Cinema = Movement: Intersections of Japanese Art and Politics." All films are in Japanese. Nov. 2 at 8: "AKA: Serial Killer" (1969, Adachi Masao, Matsuda Masao, Sasaki Mamoru, etc.). ♦ Nov. 3 at 6: "Sain/The Closed Vagina" (1963) and "Wan/Rice Bowl" (1961), produced by the Nihon University Cinema Club. ♦ Nov. 4 at 8: "Crazy Love" (1968, Okabe Michio). ♦ New York Butoh Festival. Nov. 4 at 2: "Summer Storm" (1973, Arai Misao). ♦ Nov. 4 at 3:15: "Beauty of Strength" (2001, Kazuo Ohno). ♦ Nov. 4 at 5:30: "Un Chien Andalou" (1929, Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dali; silent) and "The Seashell and the Clergyman" (1929, Germaine Dulac; silent).

BAM ROSE CINEMAS
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-636-4100)—In revival. Oct. 31-Nov. 1 and Nov. 5-6 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15; Nov. 2 and Nov. 4 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15; and Nov. 3 at 2, 4:30, and 6:50: "Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors" (†).

FILM FORUM
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110)—In revival. Oct. 31-Nov. 1 (call for showtimes): "War and Peace" (1968, Sergei Bondarchuk; in Russian). ♦ Nov. 2-20 at 1, 3:15, 5:30, 7:45, and 10: "Diva" (1981, Jean-Jacques Beineix; in French). ♦ Through Nov. 22: The films of Pietro Germi. All films are in Italian. Nov. 2-4 at 2, 4:30, 7, and 9:30: "Seduced and Abandoned" (†). ♦ Nov. 5 at 1:20, 5:10, and 9: "The Brigand of Tacca del Lupo" (1952). ♦ Nov. 5 at 3:10 and 7: "The Way of Hope" (1950). ♦ Nov. 6 at 1, 5:25, and 9:50: "The Railroad Man" (1956). ♦ Nov. 6 at 3:10 and 7:35: "The Straw Man" (1958).

FRENCH INSTITUTE ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE
Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (212-355-6160)—"Fashion Icons." Nov. 6 at 12:30, 4, and 7: "Yves Saint Laurent: His Life and Times" (2002, David Teboul; in French) and "5 Avenue Marceau" (2002, Teboul; in French).

IFC CENTER
323 Sixth Ave., at W. 3rd St. (212-924-7771)—"Waverly Midnights." Nov. 2-3: "Lost Highway" (1997, David Lynch).

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9480)—Special screenings. Oct. 31 at 6 and 8: "Night of the Living Dead" (1968, George A. Romero). ♦ "Spain (Un)Censored." All films are in Spanish. Oct. 31 at 6: "Plácido" (1961, Luis García Berlanga). ♦ Oct. 31 at 8: "Viridiana" (1961, Luis Buñuel). ♦ Nov. 1 at 8: "The Executioner" (1963, Berlanga). ♦ Nov. 2 at 6: "The Strange Trip" (1964, Fernando Fernán Gómez). ♦ Nov. 2 at 8: "Aunt Tula" (1964, Miguel Picazo). ♦ Nov. 3 at 2: "My Dearest Señorita" (1971, Jaime de Armiñán). ♦ Nov. 3 at 4: "The Hunt" (1965, Carlos Saura). ♦ Nov. 3 at 6: "Nine Letters to Bertha" (1965, Basilio Martín Patino). ♦ Nov. 3 at 8: "Songs for After a War" (1971, Patino). ♦ Nov. 4 at 2: "The Cuenca Crime" (1979, Pilar Miró). ♦ Nov. 4 at 4: "Poachers" (1975, José Luis Borau). ♦ Nov. 5 at 8: "The Spirit of the Beehive" (1973, Victor Erice). ♦ "Still Moving." Nov. 1-2 at 1:30: "L'Avventura" (1960, Michelangelo Antonioni; in Italian). ♦ Through Nov. 14: "Kino! Berlin." Except where noted, all films are in German. Nov. 1 at 7 and Nov. 4 at 2: "And Along Come Tourists" (2007, Robert Thalheim; in German, Polish, and English), introduced by the director. ♦ Nov. 2 at 6:15 and Nov. 4 at 4:30: "Prater" (2007, Ulrike Ottinger). ♦ Nov. 3 at 2: "Christo and Jeanne-Claude: The Wrapped Reichstag" (1996, Wolfram Hissen and Jörg Daniel Hissen; in English and German). ♦ Nov. 3 at 5: "Madonnas" (2007, Maria Speth; in German, French, and English). ♦ Nov. 3 at 8 and Nov. 5 at 7: "Valerie" (2006, Birgit Moeller). The Nov. 5 screening will be introduced by the director. ♦ Nov. 5 at 5: "Yella" (2007, Christian Petzold).

MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—Through Nov. 11: The films of Andy Warhol. Nov. 3 at 2: "Outer and Inner Space" (1966), "Lupe" (1965), and "More Milk Yvette" (1966). ♦ Nov. 3 at 5: "The Chelsea Girls" (1966). ♦ Nov. 4 at 2: "My Hustler" (1965) and "Loves of Ondine" (1968). ♦ Nov. 4 at 5: "Bufferin" (1966) and "Ari and Mario" (1966). ♦ Nov. 4 at 7: "Nude Restaurant" (1967).

RUBIN MUSEUM OF ART
150 W. 17th St. (212-620-5000)—"Cabaret Cinema." Nov. 2 at 9:30: "La Jetée" (1962, Chris Marker; in French and German), introduced by the writer Thomas Cahill.

SCANDINAVIA HOUSE
58 Park Ave., at 38th St. (212-847-9779)—Through Dec. 15: "A Celebration of Danish Cinema: Nordisk Film at 100." Oct. 31 at 6:30 and Nov. 3 at 3: "Hamsun" (1996, Jan Troell; in Norwegian, Swedish, German, and Danish).

SUNSHINE CINEMA
143 E. Houston St. (212-330-8182)—"Sunshine@Midnight." Nov. 2-3: "24 Hour Party People" (2002, Michael Winterbottom).

WALTER READE THEATRE
Lincoln Center (212-875-5600)—Through Nov. 14: Croatian films. All films are in Serbo-Croatian. Oct. 31 at 2 and 6: "H-8" (1958, Nikola Tanhofer). ♦ Oct. 31 at 4:10 and 8:15: "Monday or Tuesday" (1966, Vatroslav Mimica). ♦ Nov. 1 at 1 and Nov. 2 at 6:15: "The Melon Route" (2006, Branko Schmidt). ♦ Nov. 2 at 1 and 8:15: "How the War Started on My Island" (1996, Vinko Brešan). ♦ Nov. 3 at 2 and 6:15: "All for Free" (2006, Antonio Nuić). ♦ Nov. 3 at 4 and Nov. 4 at 8: "The Melody Haunts My Reverie" (1981, Rajko Grlić). ♦ Nov. 3 at 8:15 and Nov. 5 at 3:30 and 9:20: "Fine Dead Girls" (2002, Dalibor Matanić). ♦ Nov. 4 at 2 and 6: "What Iva Recorded on October 21, 2003" (2005, Tomislav Radić). ♦ Nov. 4 at 4 and Nov. 5 at 1:30 and 7:30: "Here" (2003, Zrinko Ogresta). ♦ Nov. 5 at 5:15: "What Is a Man Without a Moustache?" (2005, Hrvoje Hribar). ♦ Nov. 6 at 2 and 6:15: "Occupation in 26 Pictures" (1978, Lordan Zafranović). ♦ Nov. 6 at 4:15 and 8:30: "The Birch Tree" (1967, Ante Babaja). ♦ "Young Friends of Film." Nov. 1 at 7:30: "Murmur of the Heart" (1971, Louis Malle; in French).

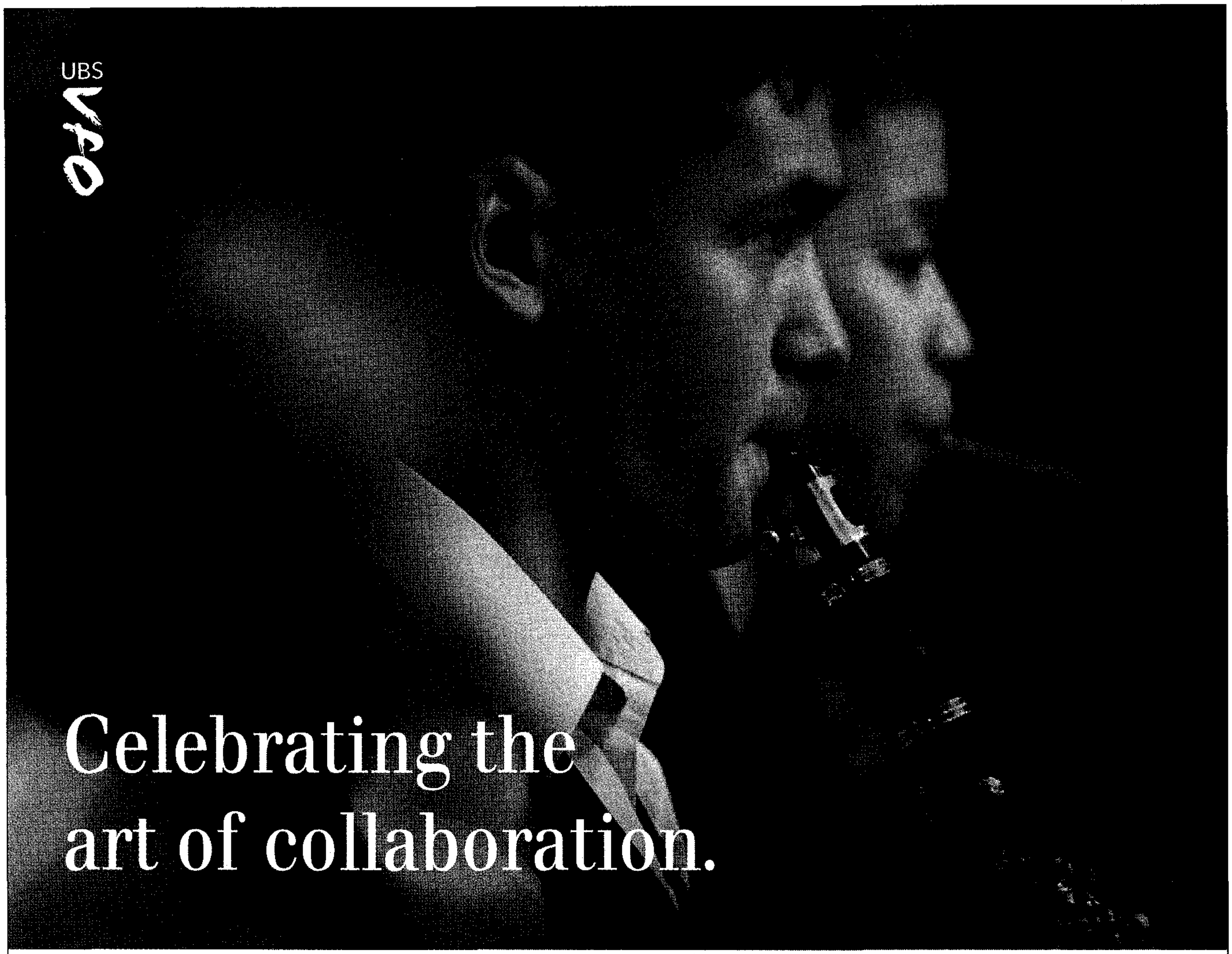
POP NOTES
GOD SAVE THE QUEEN

If a cache of never-before-heard songs from Bob Dylan's "Blonde on Blonde" sessions suddenly surfaced, there would be parades in the streets of Greenwich Village. If thirty unknown Radiohead songs turned up in a suitcase in London, the Internet would catch fire. So why the low profile for **"Rare & Unreleased Recordings from the Golden Reign of the Queen Of Soul"** (Rhino), which contains thirty-five mostly unreleased sides from Aretha Franklin's glory years at Atlantic Records? The title is generic, as is the packaging. There's no gigantic marketing campaign. The whole enterprise is marked by a kind of aggressive understatement.

Maybe it's false modesty. The set starts off with two late-1966 demos, primarily voice and piano, that Franklin made for Atlantic in advance of her début LP for the label. The songs, "I Never Loved a Man (the Way I Love You)" and "Dr. Feelgood (Love Is a Serious Business)," are familiar, but these versions aren't—they find the young (at the time, twenty-four) singer trying to evolve beyond her problematic tenure at Columbia Records, a label that tried to shape her as a more straightforward jazz vocalist and lost much of her gospel abandon in the process. Within a year, of course, Franklin would be a soul superstar, thanks to "Respect," and her next half-dozen albums—including "Lady Soul," "Spirit in the Dark," and "Young, Gifted and Black"—would establish her as one of the most important popular artists of her era. The outtakes here are not up to the level of her finest hits (how could they be?), but they still possess all kinds of magic: the deep groove of the bands, Jerry Wexler's production, and the brave choice of material (there are distinctive if strange covers of Leonard Cohen's "Suzanne" and Paul Anka's "My Way" and a definitive take on the Beatles' "Fool on the Hill").

Presiding over the proceedings are Aretha's peerless vocals, which combine power and subtlety in continually surprising ways. On "So Soon," an outtake from her album "Aretha Arrives," she struts through the verses and then digs in her heels to belt the chorus, never forgetting to pack the lyrics with pain and hope. Even better, the set permits a number of glances of Aretha at work in the studio—counting off a song, chatting with the engineers. During a botched start of "You're All I Need to Get By," she asks Wexler, "Are you taping this, Jerry?" Thankfully, he was, and she moves right into another take, forgetting the words late in the song but remembering everything else, including how to be both earthy and angelic at once.

—*Ben Greenman*



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On tour in the US from November 8 – 16 in Los Angeles, Houston, Chicago and New York.
On tour in Europe from November 19 – 24 in Genoa, Stockholm, Zurich, Lyon and Düsseldorf.

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READINGS AND TALKS

HOUSING WORKS BOOKSTORE CAFÉ
The German novelist Jenny Erpenbeck celebrates the publication of her new novel, "The Book of Words." The translator Susan Bernofsky will read excerpts in English, and the writer Nicole Krauss will provide the introduction. (126 Crosby St. No tickets necessary. Nov. 1 at 7.)

"MAKING IT PERSONAL"
The writers Katha Pollitt and Anna Quindlen talk about their work. (The Graduate Center, City University of New York, Fifth Ave. at 34th St. No tickets necessary. Nov. 5 at 6:30.)

NEW-YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY
The cartoonist Mort Gerberg, a longtime contributor to these pages, celebrates the publication of "Last Laughs: Cartoons About Aging, Retirement . . . and the Great Beyond," a collection featuring Marisa Acocella Marchetto, Jack Ziegler, and other colleagues, who will be on hand for a discussion about the book and their work. (170 Central Park W., at 77th St. For reservations, which are required, call 212-485-9217. Nov. 6 at 6:30.)

GRACE PALEY TRIBUTE
Michael Cunningham, Eve Ensler, Amy Hempel, Walter Mosley, Richard Price, Francine Prose, and others turn out to honor the short-story writer and poet, who died earlier this year. (The Great Hall, Cooper Union, Third Ave. at 7th St. Nov. 6 at 7.)

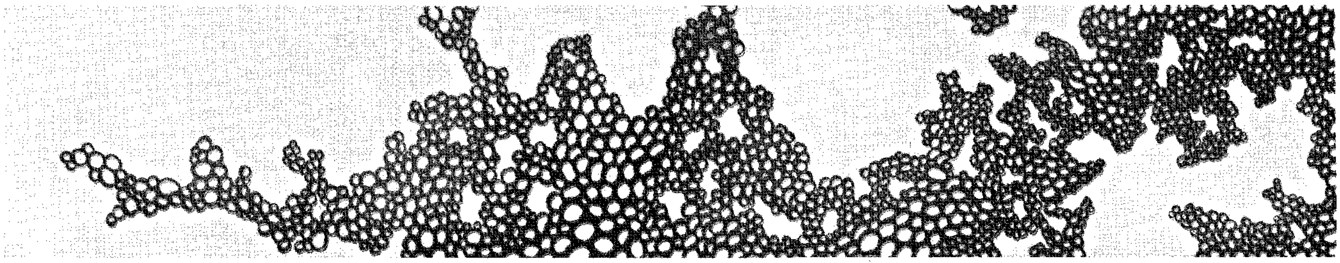
SEYMOUR M. HERSH
The investigative journalist and staff writer for this magazine talks about his work with the radio-talk-show host Leonard Lopate. (LeFrak Concert Hall, the Music Building, Queens College, Flushing. For more information, visit www.qc.edu/readings. Nov. 6 at 7.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

NEW YORK CITY MARATHON
This year, there is a small but important marathon a day before the main race. On Nov. 3, starting at 7:35 A.M., a hundred and sixty men will vie for three slots on the Olympic team slated to compete in Beijing next year. The hopefuls will gather on Fifth Avenue in front of Rockefeller Center and then take four turns around Central Park. The following day, some thirty-eight thousand runners will follow the traditional five-borough route. The men's field includes the 2004 Olympic gold medalist, from Italy, Stefano Baldini, and the former local champions Marilson Gomes dos Santos, of Brazil (2006), Hendrick Ramaala, of South Africa (2004), and the Kenyans Martin Lel (2003) and Rodgers Rop (2002). The women's field boasts the 2004 New York City title holder, Paula Radcliffe, of Great Britain, who also happens to hold the women's world record for the event (two hours, fifteen minutes, and twenty-five seconds), as well as the two-time winner and defending champion, Jelena Prokopcuka, from Latvia. (Nov. 4, with the wheelchair athletes starting at 8 A.M., the professional women at 9:35, and the professional men and general public at 10:10. For more information, visit www.ingnycmarathon.org.)

"TAKEOVER"
The Brooklyn Academy of Music is keeping its doors open, its movie projectors running, and the beer flowing nearly all night long this weekend. The event, which is entirely in earnest but features a bit of slightly ironic programming (the "mid-career Lindsay Lohan retrospective," for example), includes the screening of the cult classic "Pusher Trilogy," by the Danish filmmaker Nicolas Winding Refn, and a number of music-related films ("Stop Making Sense," "Gimme Shelter"). There is also a solid lineup of sweat-inducing bands (the Heartless Bastards, Antibalas, Be Your Own Pet), a roster of d.j.s, and a slew of art and video installations. (30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn. 718-636-4100. Nov. 3, from 9 P.M. to 4 A.M.)

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES
As a lead-in to the mega-sales of Impressionist and modern art next week, the auction houses are presenting a cornucopia of prints. **Christie's** two-day sale (Oct. 30-31) starts out with a private collection of prints and drawings by Mary Cassatt. In a lot on offer later on in the two-day sale, Mick Jagger's come-hither look gazes out from a series of ten screen prints by Andy Warhol (signed by both Warhol and Jagger), while a more playful figure in a Dubuffet lithograph, "Nez Carotte" (a funny little man with a nose in the shape of a vegetable), illustrates the artist's interest in the naïve aesthetics of outsider art. (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 212-636-2000.) ♦ Picasso and Warhol top the selection of prints at **Sotheby's** (Nov. 1-2), which also features four works by the ever-doleful Edvard Munch (including a pensive woodcut in beiges and browns, "Melancholy III") as well as an early impression of Rembrandt's "Hundred Guilder Print." (York Ave. at 72nd St. 212-606-7000.) ♦ More prints are featured in a two-part sale at **Swann** on Oct. 31, including not only such Old Masters as Dürer and Rembrandt but also artists from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, such as Pissarro ("Église et Ferme d'Éragny") and Paul Cadmus. (104 E. 25th St. 212-254-4710.)



YUKO SHIMIZU

ON THE HORIZON

CLASSICAL MUSIC
TRIPLE THREAT
Nov. 15, Nov. 19

Like his predecessor Benjamin Britten, the British composer Thomas Adès is a formidable presence as a pianist and conductor. He appears twice at Zankel Hall this month, performing with the Scharoun Ensemble and as a solo recitalist. (212-247-7800.)

ART
CIRCULAR LOGIC
Nov. 20-April 27, 2008

The New York sculptor Tara Donovan, who was born in 1969, accumulates vast quantities of commonplace things and turns them into ravishing installations. Thousands of loops of reflective Mylar tape will pattern the walls in her new site-specific piece for the Metropolitan Museum of Art. (212-535-7710.)

THE THEATRE
FAMILY DYNAMICS
Nov. 23

Raúl Esparza, Ian McShane, Eve Best, and Michael McKean star in a revival of "The Homecoming," Harold Pinter's 1965 drama about a dysfunctional family in North London, at the Cort. Daniel Sullivan ("Rabbit Hole") directs. (212-239-6200.)

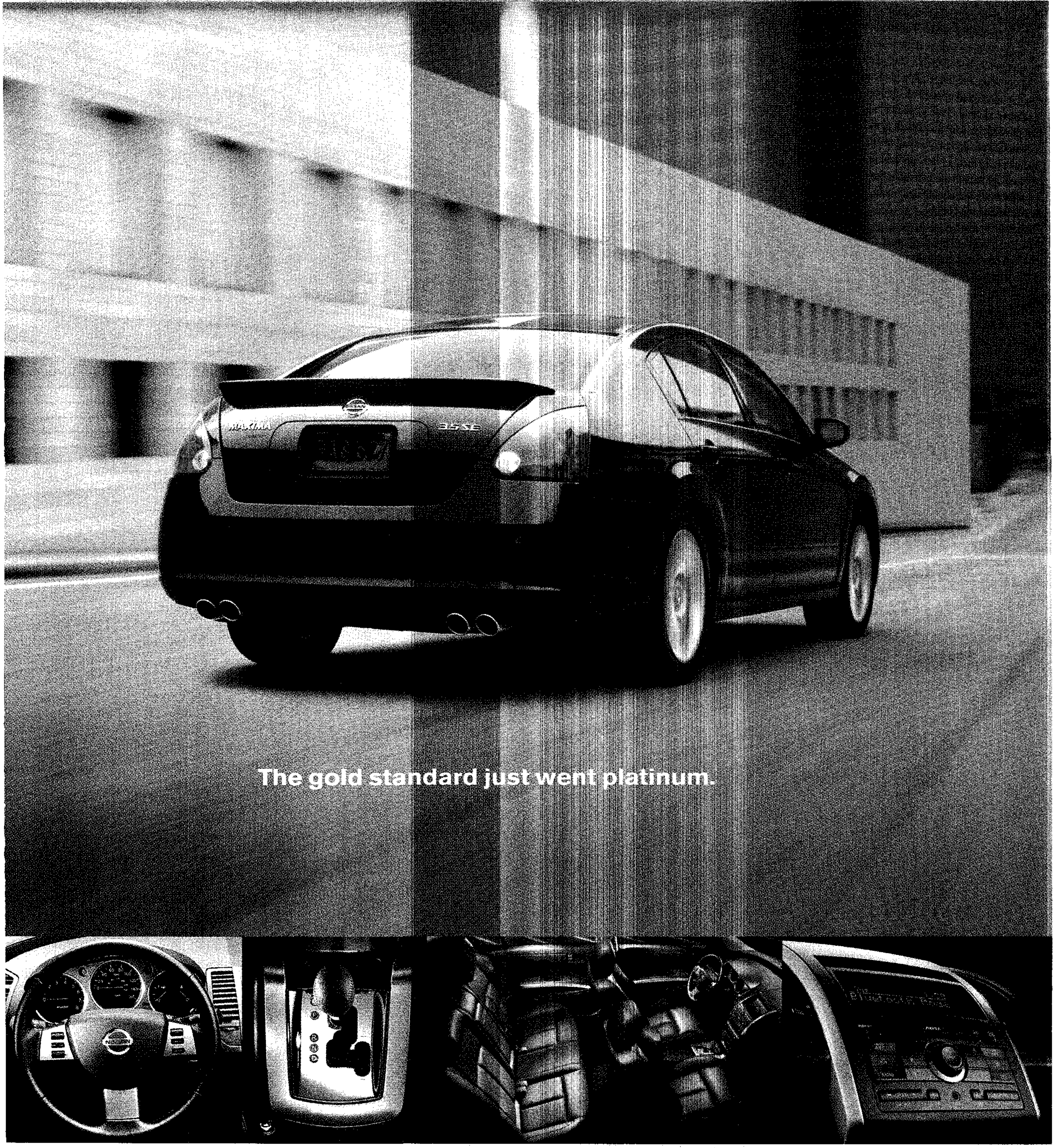
MOVIES
PASOLINI'S WORLD
Nov. 28-Dec. 4

The Italian director and poet Pier Paolo Pasolini was the cinema's great premodern postmodernist. Filming the medieval and pagan eras as a lost sensual paradise, he equated sexual and religious ecstasy, degradation and exaltation: only he could adapt with equal fidelity "The Gospel According to St. Matthew" and the Marquis de Sade's "120 Days of Sodom." As part of a citywide celebration of Pasolini, Walter Reade offers a week of his films. (212-875-5600.)

NIGHT LIFE
BUGGIN' OUT
Nov. 30-Dec. 1

The pseudo brothers Gene and Dean Ween, who bring their band to Terminal 5, are known for parodying a number of genres with aplomb. Their latest release, "La Cucaracha," is no exception—it even includes a contribution by the smooth-jazz saxophonist David Sanborn. (212-260-4700.)

Tara Donovan's installation at the Met.



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THE CHAMPIONSHIP SEASON

Fall's Classic Drama

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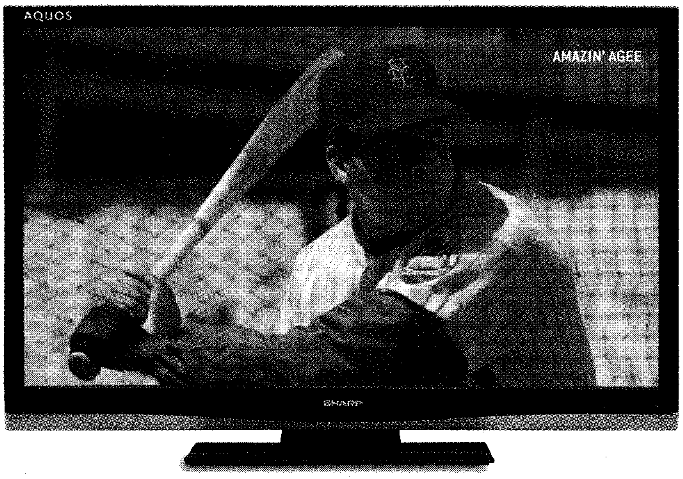
One of America's favorite sports pastimes is rich in dramatic moments—heroic feats at the plate, on the mound, and in the field that are remembered generation after generation, and which become part of a family's, a city's, even a country's history. But baseball's special fascination lies not only with the iconic home run and the great catch, but in the details that surround them—details that should never be lost in the telling. Or in the viewing. And that's just what Sharp AQUOS HD technology promises to deliver, pitch by pitch, inning by inning, game by game, throughout the Fall Classic.

PAUL BLAIR The O's center fielder was a multiple American League All-Star and Gold Glove award winner.

The 1969 World Series is one of the most memorable—and improbable—in the more than one-hundred-year-old tradition of championship baseball. It featured one of the greatest upsets of all time. The Amazin' Mets, lovable losers since their beginnings in 1962, knocked off the heavily favored Baltimore Orioles in five games.

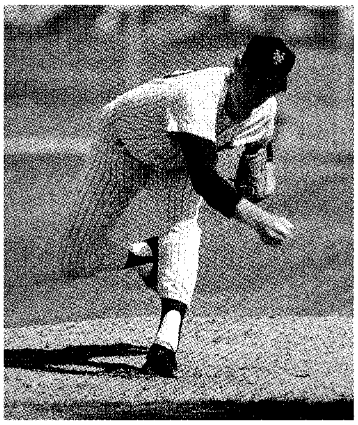
Pivotal Game Three, with the Series tied at 1-1, was known by many as "the Tommie Agee game." The Mets' center fielder led off the game with a home run and later made a pair of sensational running catches with a total of five runners on base that preserved their lead, in a game the Mets eventually won 5-0.



OUTSTANDING DETAIL, SLEEK DESIGN The widescreen Sharp AQUOS LCD TV turns every seat into the best seat in the house.

Agee single-handedly made a six-run difference. But the game could also be known as "the Nolan Ryan" game, for it featured the only World Series appearance in the twenty-seven-year career of the great Hall of Fame flamethrower. And a memorable appearance it was. Ryan, then just twenty-two years old, was a middle reliever for the Mets.

When the Mets' starting pitcher loaded the bases with two out in the seventh, Ryan entered the game to pitch to Paul Blair, the tough center fielder for the O's. Blair promptly slashed a pitch deep into the right-center field gap that was sure to clear the bases. But the ball ended up in the glove of Agee, who sprinted to his left to catch it, sliding on his belly across the grass.



"THE RYAN EXPRESS" still ranks first in baseball history for career strikeouts.

In the ninth, a single and walk with two down brought Blair to the plate again. In the lengthening shadows at Shea Stadium, with 56,335 of the Met faithful cheering him on, young Ryan, of the blazing fastball, dropped a sharp, snapping curve ball over the heart of the plate for a called strike three.

The Mets never looked back, and became the Miracle Mets by winning the next two games to close out the Series.

In the reports of the day, Agee was the team's hero, but a second-year pitcher from Alvin, Texas, made his mark, the first of many he would make in baseball, yet his one and only in a World Series game.

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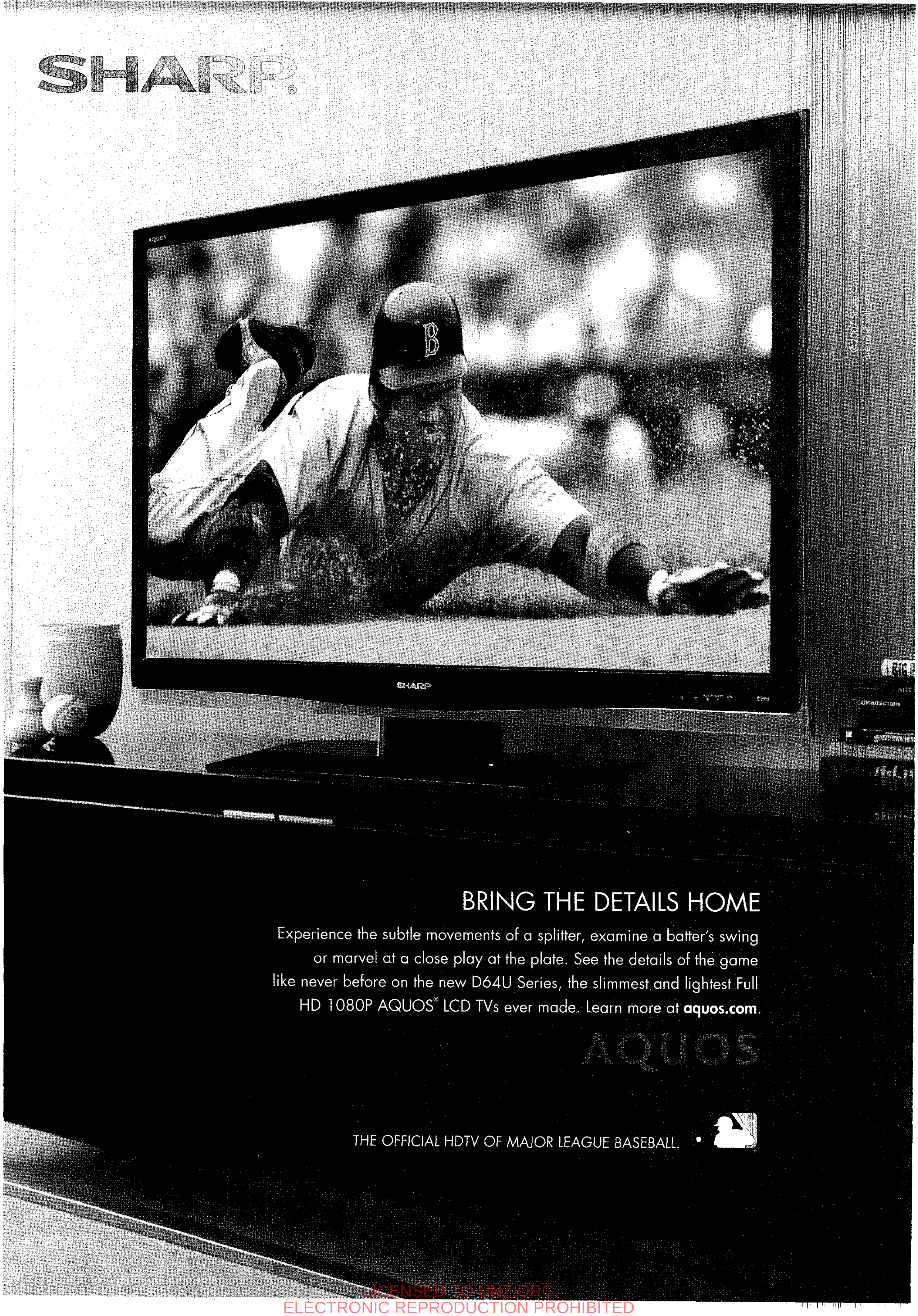

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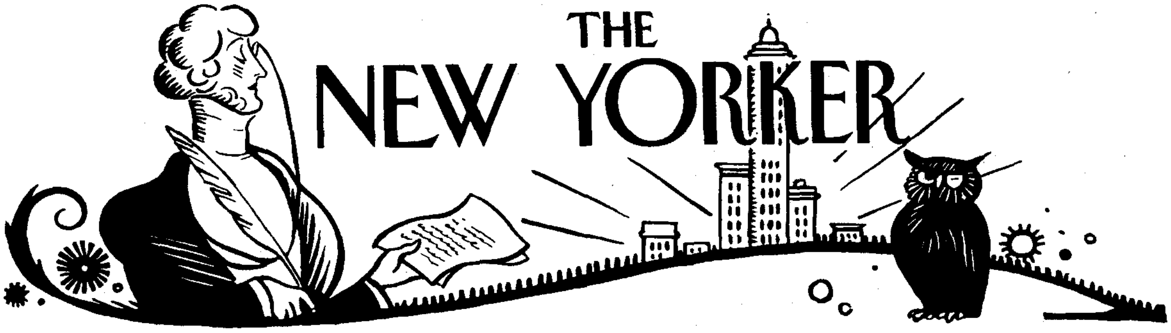
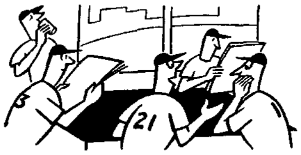


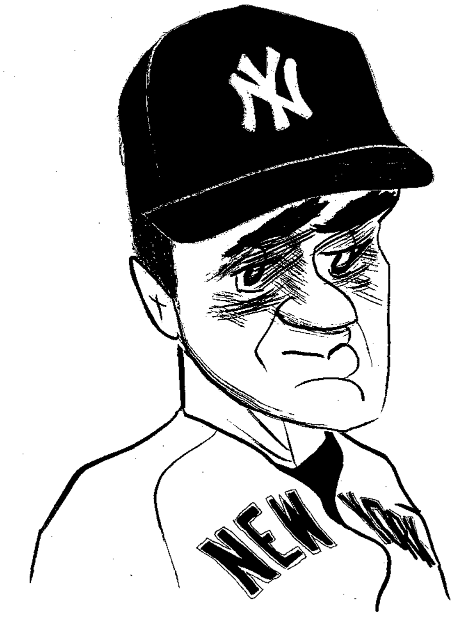
THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT
SO LONG, JOE



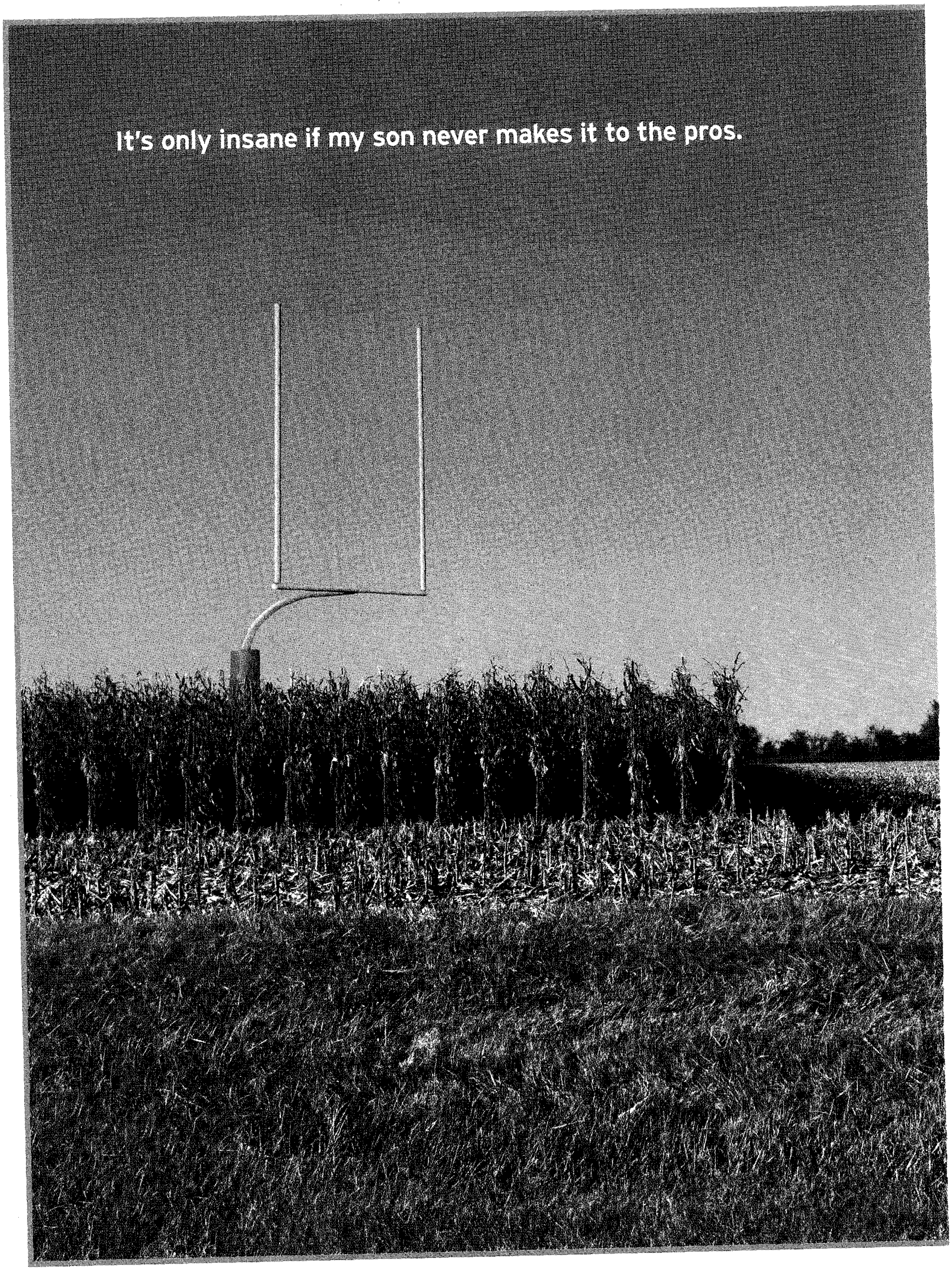
The Red Sox and the Colorado Rockies wrap up their World Series this week, at last delivering a winner at the end of a season of spectacular losses in baseball. The art of losing isn't hard to master, as Elizabeth Bishop told us, and for stretches in the late going this year it seemed as if the teams and the players were only out there to illuminate the maxim. In the divisional playoffs, the first round of the post-season, the Cubs, the Phillies, and the Angels all went down in the minimum three straight games, while the Yankees struggled to a lone win against the Cleveland Indians and then disappeared, losing their adulated long-term manager, Joe Torre, in consequence. The Mets, viewed for a time as the best team in either league, contrived to lose twelve out of their last seventeen games on the schedule—a feat unmatched and unimagined in the pastime—and lost first place in their division to the Phillies on the final day of the season and, with it, a place in the playoffs. Elsewhere, the San Diego Padres, one strike short of attaining their own post-season slot, instead surrendered a game-tying triple to Tony Gwynn, Jr., a Milwaukee Brewers rookie, and eventually saw the game and (after a one-game playoff) their hopes slip away. A week before, Padres manager Bud Black, while attempting to pull Milton Bradley (the outfielder, not the Parcheesi board) away from an argument with first-base umpire Mike Winters, inadvertently threw him to the ground and lost him for the rest of the year with a torn ACL.

Baseball will stick it to you; it means to break your heart, and though old fans do understand that it's losing, in all its variety, that makes winning so sweet, the departure of Joe Torre is something else altogether. Gone after twelve years at the helm of the Yankees, the longest uninterrupted run since Casey Stengel's 1949-60 tenure, Torre was victim of a corporate midfield takedown: the decision by the owner, George Steinbrenner, and his nepotic front office not to renew—or not acceptably renew—his contract, after the team's failure to progress beyond the first round of post-season play in the past three Octobers. Torre's first Yankee team captured a thrilling World Championship in 1996, and three more between 1998 and 2000, at one stretch winning fourteen consecutive Series games. His teams also attained the post-season in each of his dozen years in the Bronx: a far greater achievement, all in all, in an era when the distribution of player talent and the intensity of team competition have been upgraded by a luxury tax imposed on the richest teams, starting, of course, with the Yanks. The Colorado Rockies are the ninth team to represent the National League in the World Series in the past decade, and seven teams have emerged as World Champions in the same period; so far (unless the Red Sox prevail), the Yankees have been the only multiple winner. Quite a performance, but not nearly good enough for those on the Steinbrenner side of the room, where, as has long been understood, only another World Championship is acceptable in the end.



What has set apart the Torre era is not just winning but a sense of attachment and identification that he effortlessly inspired among the fans and the players and the millions of sports bystanders. Already known by the fans as a strong-swinging Brooklyn-born catcher (and, later, a third baseman)

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL


It's only insane if my son never makes it to the pros.

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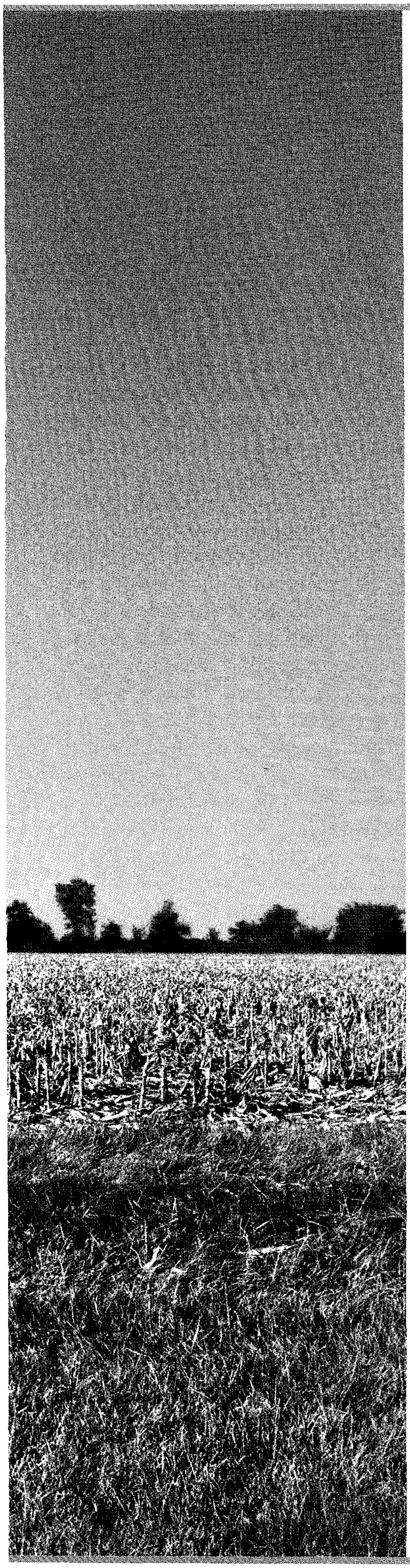

Pee-Wee football **2015 draft pick**

My son Jason came into this world kicking. My wife said he'd been kicking long before he was even born. And growing up he kicked everything. Balls in the house. The tires on the truck. His little sister. The boy just wanted to kick. So we bought the cleats, helmet, shoulder pads, and a whole bunch of jerseys with our Citi card. And then we bought the goalpost. Getting it into the truck was interesting. **Whatever your story is, your Citi card can help you write it.**

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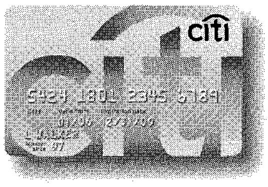

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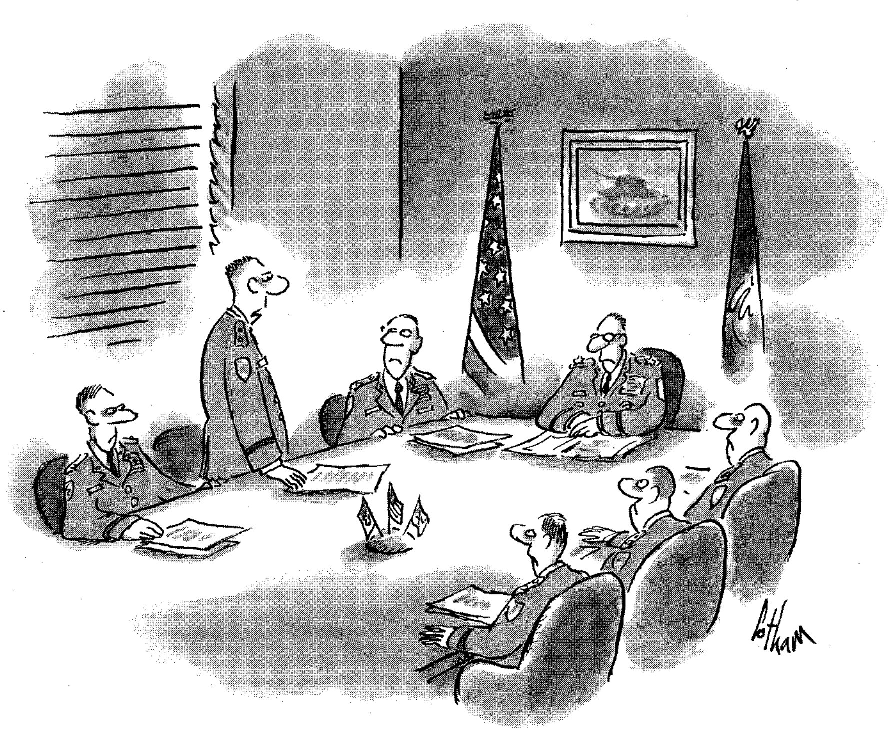


"I've decided to pursue a military career in the private sector."

with an eighteen-year career with the Braves, the Cardinals, and the Mets, and then for his long tenure as a semi-distinguished manager of the same three teams, he became a sudden celebrity, a Page Six sweetheart, in his first season with the Yankees, when his brother Frank Torre, another former major leaguer, underwent successful heart-replacement surgery the day before the last game of the World Series. The fourth game, in which the Yankees, trailing the Braves by 2–1 in the Series and 6–0 on the scoreboard, came back to win in extra innings, beginning their rush to the championship, changed New York to a Yankee town overnight. Torre's composure and steadiness in hard times became as familiar as his odd, tilting trudge from the dugout to the mound to call in a fresh pitcher. A habitual modesty interwoven with an awareness of the difficult daily grind powerfully secured him to his players. Whenever someone brought up the batting title and National League M.V.P. award he had captured in 1971 with a .363 average, he threw in a reminder about his .289 mark the following year. Mid-July often brought on a retelling of a game of his as a Mets third baseman in 1975, when he batted into four double plays and also committed an error. This ease with himself and his profession set the tone in his pre-game and post-game press conferences, delivered every day to thirty or forty writers, plus TV and radio and Japan.

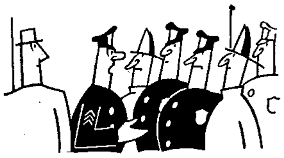
Again and again in his long run, Torre would be asked by the writers about some slumping or hurting Yankee player, and he gave back just about the same magical reply. Pressed in late August this year about the veteran Yankee starter Mike Mussina, whose lost mastery had just cost him his place in the starting rotation, Joe said, "Yes, he's not maybe as proud of his stuff as he'd like to be." A silence followed, while the reporters saw the crisis afresh from the mind of the player. A month later, Mussina said, "I'd play for the guy anytime."

The Yankees lost their divisional to the Indians because Chien-Ming Wang, their ace and the starter in the first and fourth games, couldn't get his sinkerball working. In the second game, their brilliant rookie setup pitcher, Joba Chamberlain, defending a 1–0 Yankee lead in the eighth, was assailed by a mating swarm of midges on the mound at Cleveland's Jacobs Field and gave up the tying run on a wild pitch. The Indians played on, midges or no midges, and won in the eleventh. That was about it.

The shock of Torre's departure will not soon go away, but of course we should have known how it would play out. Only the owners, down in Tampa, seemed startled (at times, anyway) by his decision, but if they knew anything about him how could they not have known what would follow? Is it possible that they have no sense of the calamity to the franchise and to the fans and to baseball itself that the departure of Joe Torre from New York represents? He, at last, supplied the touch of class, the Augustan presence, that the Yankees had so insistently proclaimed for themselves and have now thrown away. For Torre, it was still about the players. Meeting the press at the Stadium after the third divisional game, the last victory of his regime, he said, "Every time we go to the post-season, there's nothing that's going to satisfy anybody unless you win the World Series. And that's very difficult. . . . I understand the requirements here, but the players are human beings, and it's not machinery here. Even though they get paid a lot of money, it's still blood that runs through their veins." There was a little more in this tenor and then he brightened: "For a guy that never got to the post-season as a player, I'm having a hell of a lot of fun when you look back on the whole thing."

—*Roger Angell*

POSTCARD FROM CALIFORNIA
THE FIRES



Southern Californians don't like to wake up to hot weather. It's a sign of the short and eerie autumn season that's marked by the influence of the Santa Anas—dry winds that come from the desert, dervish through the canyons, and head for the sea. People blame the Santa Anas for their headaches and their allergies. Starting last Saturday, the winds drove brush fires that, by the seventh day, had burned nearly five hundred thousand acres, injuring sixty-four, killing seven, and destroying some seventeen hundred houses, the majority of them in San Diego County. Hundreds of thousands across the region fled their homes.

The fire in Malibu started before dawn on Sunday, in the canyon behind Pepperdine University, where there were some downed power lines. (The cause is still under investigation.) Brush fires are dynamic: an ember jumped and fire consumed a Presbyterian church; another sailed on high winds (the gusts were more than eighty miles an hour) and devoured Castle Kashan, a crenellated Arthurian behemoth built by a doctor in the seventies and filled by its current owner, whose father was an oil minister in pre-revolutionary Iran, with Presidential and Elvis memorabilia. Movie stars evacuated their houses at the beach.

At the top of Carbon Canyon—blackened down to the ocean—on Tuesday afternoon, a thick, warm wind still blew from the east. A couple of kids, Michael and Colin, stopped on the side of the road. They were trying to bring their dogs home after two nights away, but their street remained closed. They had watched the flames leap the road from the canyon and come toward their house. "There was a lot of smoke," Colin, who is eleven, said. "It was like a tornado." Michael, his seventeen-year-old brother, said, "They said that we were the most prepared house. We have a fifteen-thousand-gallon tank." Colin chimed in, "And a fifteen-thousand-gallon pool!"

A jeep splattered with pink flame retardant pulled up. "I was in the war zone," the driver, Marty Dugan—fifty years old, corduroy shorts, no shirt, good watch—said. He pointed out his house, in Carbon Canyon: perfectly intact, at the center of an island of green, surrounded by burn. His family left, but when the police came by to clear the area he hid. He had five horses to protect, and a donkey named Waffles. "I was there for the duration—if the fire was taking my house, I was going with it," he said. "The anticipation was the scariest—seeing hundred-and-twenty-foot flames coming at me. Not a lot keeps me up at night, but I was up for forty-eight hours straight." He said he had got a great deal on his property, sold to him by a member of Guns N' Roses who was scared off by the devastating Malibu fire of 1993.

The defiant mood of the mountains was more muted at the beach. Scotty Brown, a local real-estate agent, stood in front of his office, at the end of Malibu Road, looking up at the ruins of the castle. "That was my listing," he said glumly. It had been on the market for seventeen million dollars. Only the guest-house was still standing.

Smoke in the air makes for extra-beautiful sunsets. The sky purpled to the color of a mussel shell, then turned a muzzy black. The Compton sheriff's deputies, called in to help guard blocked roads, dined on food donated by Nobu Malibu. At nine o'clock, the thermometer read ninety-one degrees. By the next night, the Canyon Fire, as it was called, had been contained, and the command center had released a number of firefighters and support crews to points south.

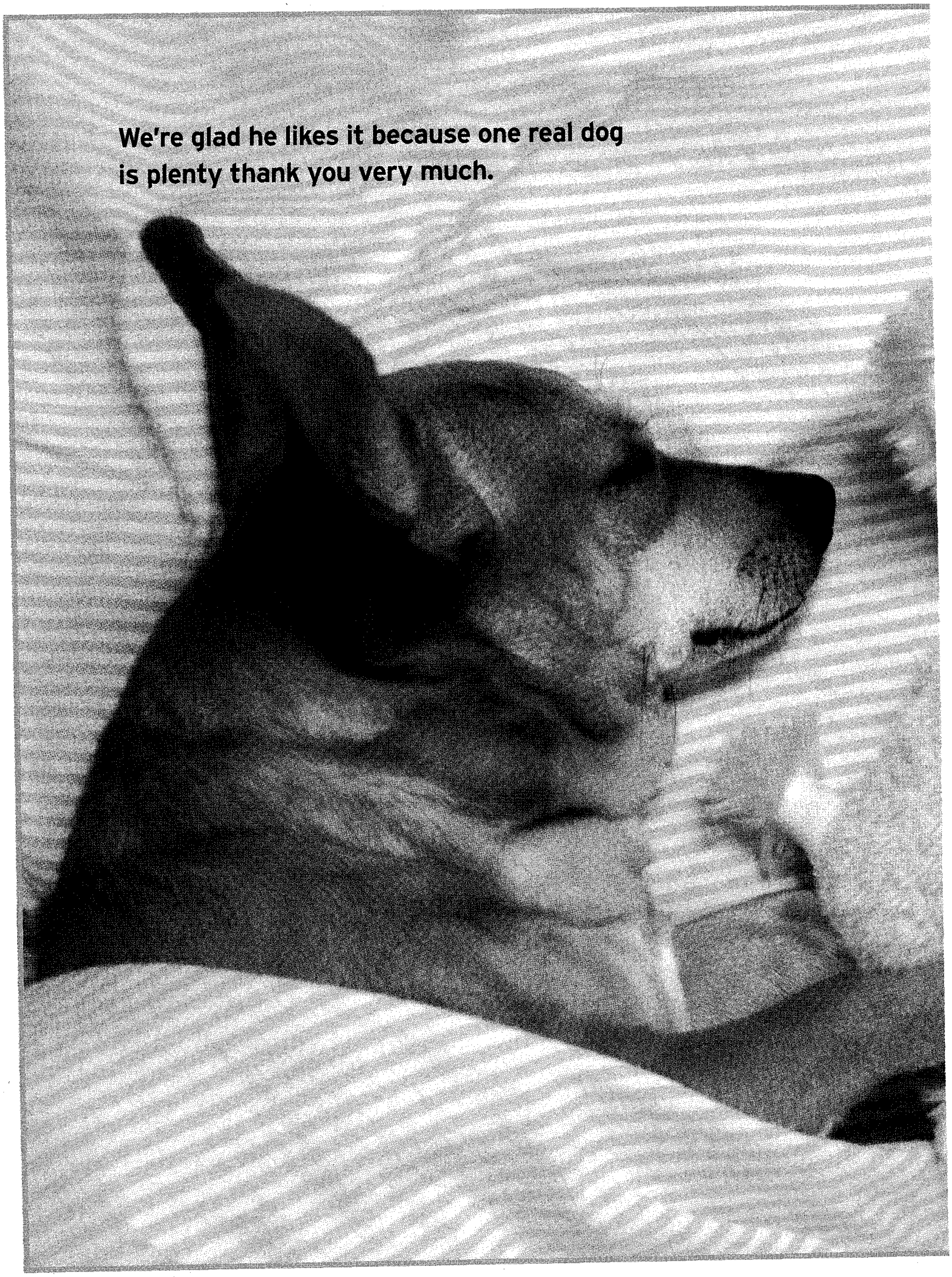
The Witch Fire, the largest in the state, started in San Diego County midday Sunday, a little bit west of Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. By Wednesday morning, it covered nearly two hundred thousand acres and was only ten per cent contained. In Rancho Santa Fe, an area known for its expensive houses, dozens burned to the ground. One, its home gym still smoldering and the skeleton of a go-kart out back, had a yellow Porsche in the driveway. The car was covered with a thin film of ash, in which someone—presumably a firefighter—had written the word "Sorry." National Guardsmen in Humvees were posted all around the neighborhood to protect against looting.

At Qualcomm Stadium, which at one point sheltered an estimated eleven thousand evacuees, things were calm. In enlightened California fashion, bilingual services, acupuncture, and kosher food were offered, and the spirit of entrepreneurship was alive in the land. A woman handed out pink memos that read, "If your home has been affected by the fires I can rent my vacation condo." Telephone companies provided free wireless. Wal-Mart donated a million dollars in cash and four hundred thousand dollars' worth of goods to the relief effort, and presented an oversized check at a press conference outside under a special Wal-Mart awning.

Everyone was proud to distinguish between the conditions at Qualcomm and those at the Superdome in New Orleans, but the evacuees were stressed out and weary nonetheless. Xudong Yu, a Sony software engineer with three children, stood near a nest of cots. His eyes were bloodshot, and an inside-out sport shirt was neatly tucked into his pants. His daughters were tidying up but not yet getting ready to go home. They had left their apartment in Rancho Bernardo two days before, and didn't know what had become of it.

Jerry Sanders, the mayor of San Diego, stopped by. He said that he was pleased with the evacuation process, and with the repopulation of neighborhoods that was getting under way. "There's nobody that's ever moved on the scale that we just moved on," he said. "I don't believe anybody's ever evacuated five hundred thousand residents—that's how many residents in this county of three million people were moved during this fire, and it's still continuing."

Two new arrivals set up folding chairs outside the stadium. They were


We're glad he likes it because one real dog
is plenty thank you very much.

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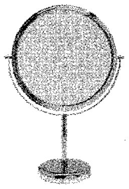
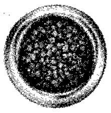
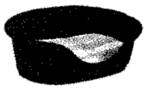
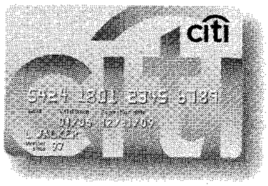
Stuffed poodle **Smitten dog**

With all the howling Max was doing, my husband Eric and  I just figured he was lonely. So we used our Citi card to buy a new mirror and tried putting it at floor level. No dice. We tried changing the dog food.  Treats. A new dog bed.  We even brought in a pet therapist, and still Max seemed so sad. Then it dawned on us – maybe he just needed a companion. Now everyone sleeps better at night. **Whatever your story is, your Citi card can help you write it.**

What's your story?



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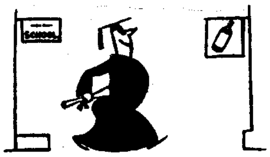
from Spring Valley, due east of downtown San Diego, and had come reluctantly. “I stayed for the fire, but the smoke got to me,” Esther Tachiquin said. She sat in one of the chairs, a garbage bag of clothing at her feet. “I think I’m gonna go back. I’ve been homeless once, and I don’t want to be homeless again.” Her friend, Sherry Deranleau, said she’d been forced out of her apartment building by the landlord, who was wearing a face mask and was so angry that his temple throbbed. The two women were thinking about sleeping in the parking lot. Deranleau said, “They’re really nice people in there, but I don’t want to be a victim.”

Wednesday night, some neighborhoods in Rancho Bernardo were reopening to residents. At a nearby gas station, a woman wandered around the parking lot, chewing nervously on an apple. She had windblown blond hair, and wore a thin vest printed with hibiscus blossoms. Her son waited in a small white car, the back seat of which was stuffed with blankets, pillows, clothes. “My mom’s dying in L.A.,” she said. “I was at my friend’s house in Rancho Bernardo. I woke up and saw the fire fly by my face. My house in Lake Hodges burned.” She didn’t know where she’d go next. “Now I’m living out of my car,” she said.

“Mom! Mom!” her son called. She broke off abruptly, got in the car, and sped away.

—*Dana Goodyear*

PRECOCIOUS
CONDI’S PARTY STARTER

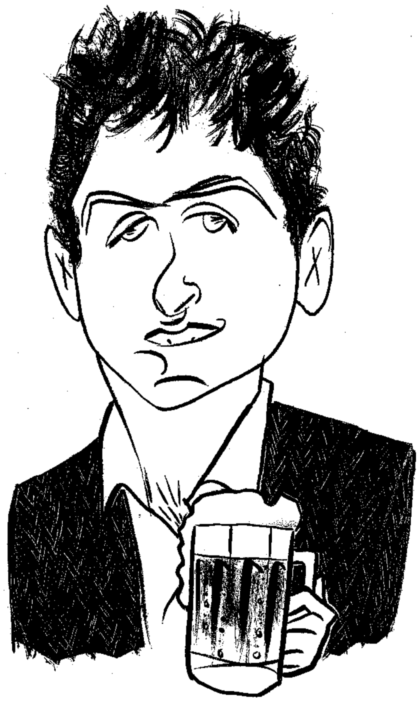


At the age of twenty-five, Henry Kissinger was a war-delayed sophomore at Harvard, Madeleine Albright had just begun her Ph.D., James Baker was in law school, and Condoleezza Rice was a graduate student at the University of Denver. One of Rice’s recent hires, however, seems to be in a big hurry to get on with the diplomacy. A year ago, Jared Cohen, who was born in 1981, joined the State Department’s Policy Planning Staff as its youngest member. Having completed a degree at Stanford, won a Rhodes Scholarship, and earned a master’s in international relations at Oxford, Cohen helps advise the State Department on “counter-radicalization,” youth, and education, with a special emphasis on the Muslim world. Last week, Penguin published Cohen’s book—his second—“Children of Jihad: A Young American’s Travels Among the Youth of the Middle East.”

“When we talk about the people of the Islamic world, the irony is that the majority of those people—sixty per cent—are under the age of thirty,” Cohen said recently, over a tuna steak at an Upper East Side restaurant. A former soccer player, with lightly moussed hair, he wore jeans, a blue shirt, and a herringbone jacket. He continued, “I always say that the largest party in every country—the largest opposition group in every country—is the youth party.”

Before his State Department days, while he was still a graduate student at Oxford, Cohen talked his way into a visa for Iran, where he hoped to interview members of the political resistance. Instead, he made friends his own age, while being dogged by a full-time official “tour guide,” whom he and his new companions nicknamed Ayatollah Assahola. (He is quick to point out that “if one didn’t know the context in which I was making those jokes, with friends, it might come across the wrong way.”) At night, his friends helped him evade his official escort and took him to Tehran’s underground house parties. “They make alcohol in their bathtubs and their sinks,” Cohen said. “And the drug use—it’s really no different from a frat party. You have to pinch yourself and remind yourself that you’re in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Iranian young people are one of the most pro-American populations in the Middle East. They just don’t know who to gravitate around, so young people gravitate around each other. I’ll never look at partying the same way.”

A fellow Theta Delt from Stanford owned an apartment in Beirut, so, armed with his barely useful classical Arabic (he is fluent in Swahili and conversant in Maa), Cohen went to Lebanon next. He attended wild multisectarian beach parties, debated young members of Hezbollah at McDonald’s, and was eventually taken through a labyrinth of passageways to meet General Mounir Maqdah, the head of Fatah in the Ayn al-Hilwah Palestinian refugee camp. At the Mia Mia camp, he asked a group of young Hamas supporters what they’d do if a Jewish person entered their ranks. “We would cut his head off,” one replied. Later, he told them he was Jewish. “They didn’t respond with anger,” he writes. “They didn’t threaten me . . . . I learned that in their classrooms there are not enough books to go around and sometimes the teachers don’t even show up.”



Jared Cohen

On his own in Syria, he found that young people walked many kilometres to communicate with each other via Internet cafés, and that Bluetooth technology is the preferred means of organizing both straight and gay raves. From Syria, he went to Kurdish Iraq, but on the way back to Syria he fell asleep in his cab and woke up alone in the middle of Mosul, in the thick of the insurgency. He eventually made it back to Damascus, and decided to write the book.

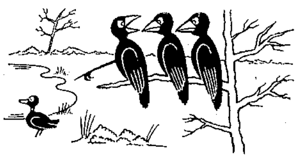
Today, Cohen helps advise Rice (“She truly cares about young people,” he says) on how the U.S. can divert the world’s impressionable youth away from “illicit actors.” He likened his department, the Policy Planning Staff, to an “idea shop” for the Secretary of State. “My job is to put as many ideas out there as possible every day,” he explained. “Some of them will get traction, some won’t—some of them *shouldn’t*.” Cohen still spends long hours on planes—he just returned from Algeria and Tunisia—but he now has a firmer itinerary. “Basically, I do a safer version of what I used to do,” he said. “Now I’m in a place where I can take what young people are saying to me and work with my colleagues in Operations and in the embassies to do something that actually happens on the ground.”

A true diplomat, Cohen managed to garner blurbs and support from graying Cabinet-level eminences on both sides of the aisle, including Zbigniew Brzezinski, Frank Carlucci, and Brent Scowcroft. He claims to be nonpartisan, but said, “Secretary Carlucci has been a wonderful mentor to me.” Hungry Upper East Siders were hovering over the table by the time Cohen returned to his themes of Middle Eastern youth: “You meet these young kids and you party with them, and they know the world has misperceptions of what they’re like. Every single young person is reachable. Ask them what dating is like in their country, ask them if they have a girlfriend, ask them what their type is. There’s nobody who’s too conservative to talk about that.”

—*Jesse Lichtenstein*

HERE TO THERE DEPT.

A BIRD’S LIFE



If you’re a small bird, bound for, say, the Caribbean in the autumn, your stay in New York City will begin around dawn. You’ll be worn out from flying through the night and desperate for a safe place to rest and to eat, well, like a bird, which is to say, like a pig. A forest by a river would be perfect. Asphalt, steel, and glass are not. If you happen to land in actual woodland by an actual river in the Bronx, you could be snatched, alien-abduction style, by intelligent beings. Beings who then weigh and measure you, poke you with a needle, and maybe scan you with a super-magnet. And blow hard on your chest. (They always do that.) Also, fit you with a tiny ankle bracelet, to track you for the rest of your life.

If this has happened to you in New York City, it is the work of Chad Seewagen and Eric Slayton, ornithologists who want to understand how birds like you cope with cities, which, inconveniently, have been built under your Atlantic migration route. Birds in an urban park, Seewagen said, are in a tough spot: “They’re concentrated into a small area, food is limited, there are lots of people and dogs and other animals all over the place.”

As usual during migration season, he had a bird in hand. Five inches long, and weighing about the same as two nickels, the bird stuck its beaked head out above the turret of Seewagen’s gently closed fingers and kept completely still except for the *thumpa-thumpa-thumpa* of its heart, beating five hundred times a minute. Seewagen carefully parted the bird’s blue-gray head feathers. “See the red on its crown? That’s a Nashville warbler. This bird was probably flying all night long from Connecticut. That’s like a person running at top speed from sundown to sunup.”

After such a night, a warbler drops out of the predawn sky in a condition called “hyperphagia,” from the Greek for “eat” and “a lot.” It must rebuild its body fat to stay alive and to fuel the next stage of its journey. To know how the city affects birds, Seewagen and Slayton need to know whether they are able to get enough food to plump up to flying weight.

So, for the past four years, in woodland on the grounds of the Bronx Zoo, Seewagen, who is twenty-eight and taciturn, with close-cropped red hair and broad shoulders, and Slayton, who is forty-two and talkative, shaggy, and slight (and also Seewagen’s half brother), have netted some four thousand migrants. If you were one of them, you got probed and were let go within five or ten minutes. As far as ornithologists can tell, you’d feel none the worse for your mishap (and way better than if you had run across John James Audubon on a busy afternoon—he counted a day wasted unless he had shot a hundred birds).

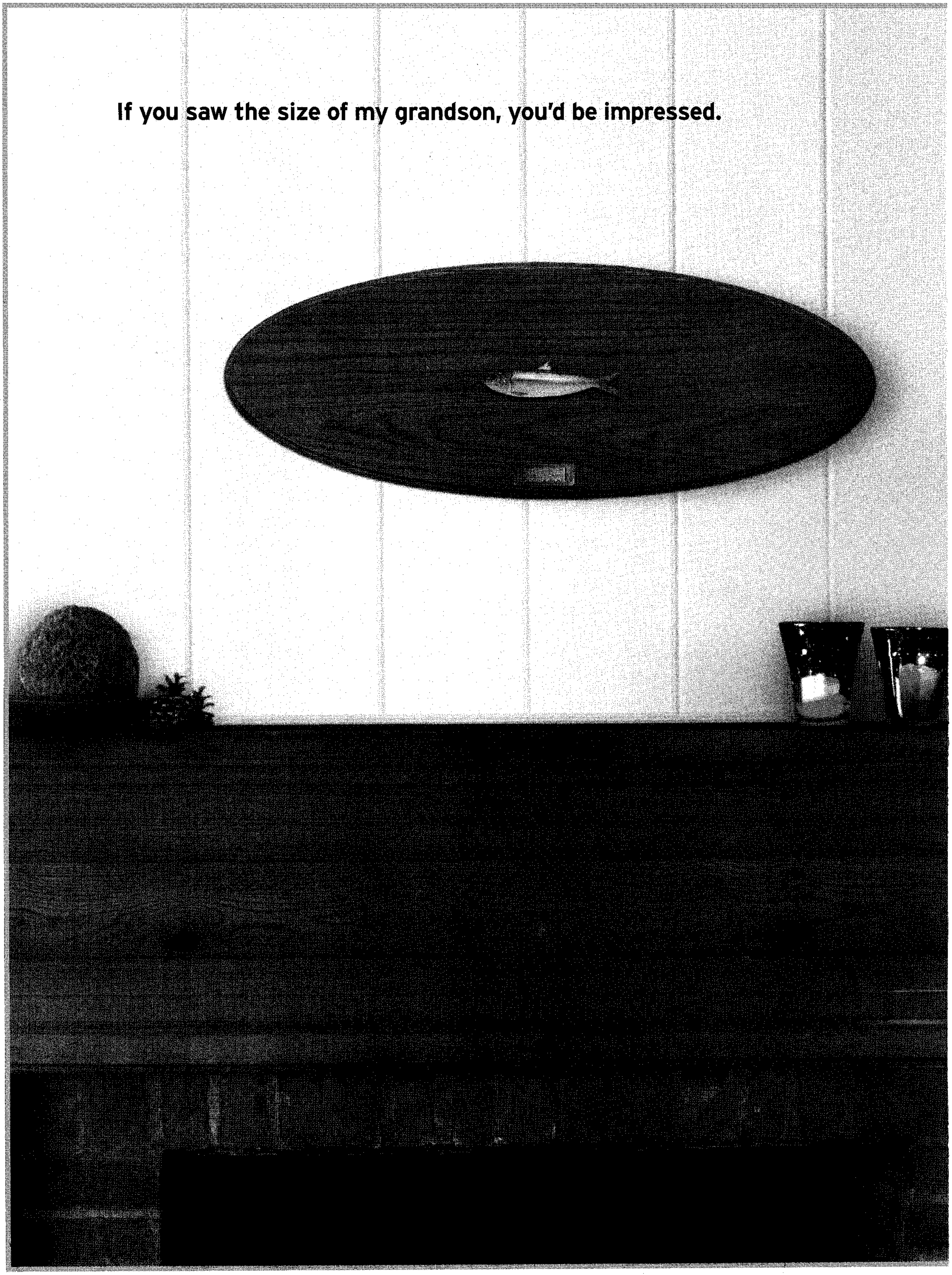
The pair recently expanded their program to parts of Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Westchester County, but the center of the operation, at the Bronx Zoo, is the Field Laboratory for Integrative Ecological Research (or FLIER), which is a single-wide trailer crammed with stuff from every era in the history of human-avian relations. It has nets that a caveman could understand, rings for bird-banding (which Audubon thought up in the nineteenth century), and the latest tools: a bird-size MRI, an ultrasound scanner, and blood-sample kits.

For a while, Seewagen and Slayton used a Breathalyzer on selected species, transferring exhaled breath from beak to balloon and then to sealed tube; the idea was that a lab would analyze it for carbon content—an indicator of what the bird ate. More recently, they have switched to blood tests. “The blood samples are used for measuring triglyceride levels, to see how fast the bird is able to fatten up, which tells us the quality of its habitat,” Seewagen said. The MRI scanner produces pictures of the insides of each captive, revealing every scrap of fat.

This fall, the men worked from a folding table in their sampling areas, where their federal license permits them to string up fine nets on seven-foot metal poles. The other day, Slayton banded a Nashville warbler. He held the bird, beak up, to his lips and blew, parting its breast feathers and revealing the nubbly red skin underneath, so that he could gauge its body fat. Then he put the bird head down in a piece of white PVC pipe (“standard Home Depot issue,” he said). Sticking out were the bird’s tail and its wire-thin feet, which stirred slightly—strange flowers in a strange vase. The pipe was resting on a digital scale. Seewagen wrote down the bird’s weight in his lab notebook and flicked up the PVC. The warbler shot off like an arrow into the surrounding trees, and Slayton turned toward his half brother.

“Can I have another bird, please?”

—*David Berreby*



If you saw the size of my grandson, you'd be impressed.

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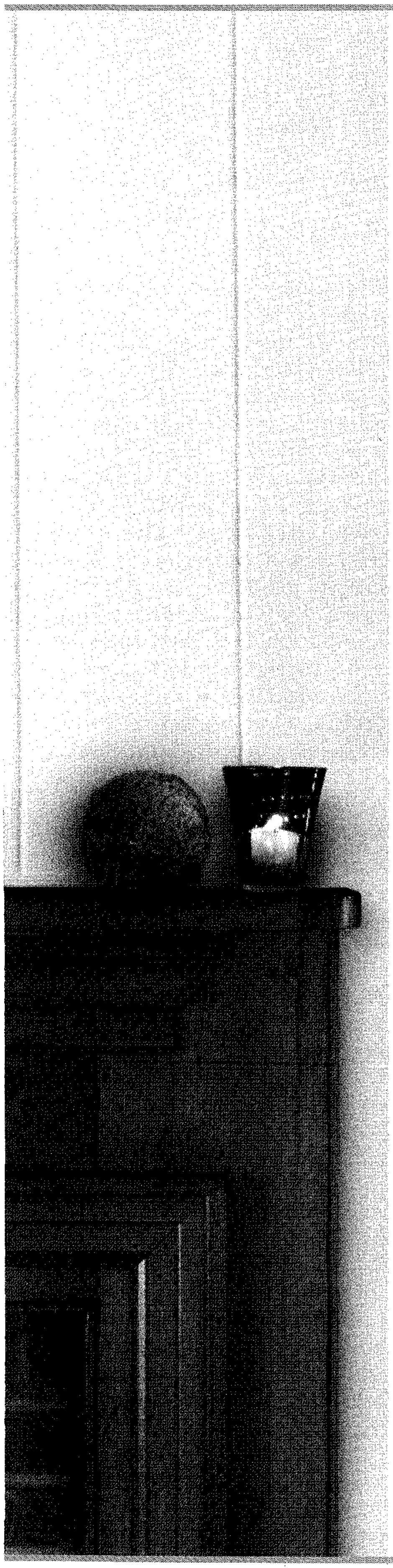
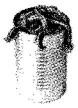
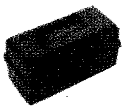
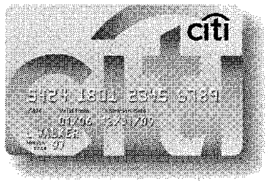


New fishing pole **New best friend**

Three weeks ago I looked outside and said, "Today's the day I'm taking my grandson Brian fishing." So I fished out my Citi card to buy the worms,  the sure-fire lures, and Brian picked out a brand-new rod. We spent a lot of time getting to know each other on that lake.  And while we weren't able to reel in the Big One, it didn't matter. Because wouldn't you know it, I ended up getting hooked on an 8-year-old kid.

Whatever your story is, your Citi card can help you write it.

What's your story?



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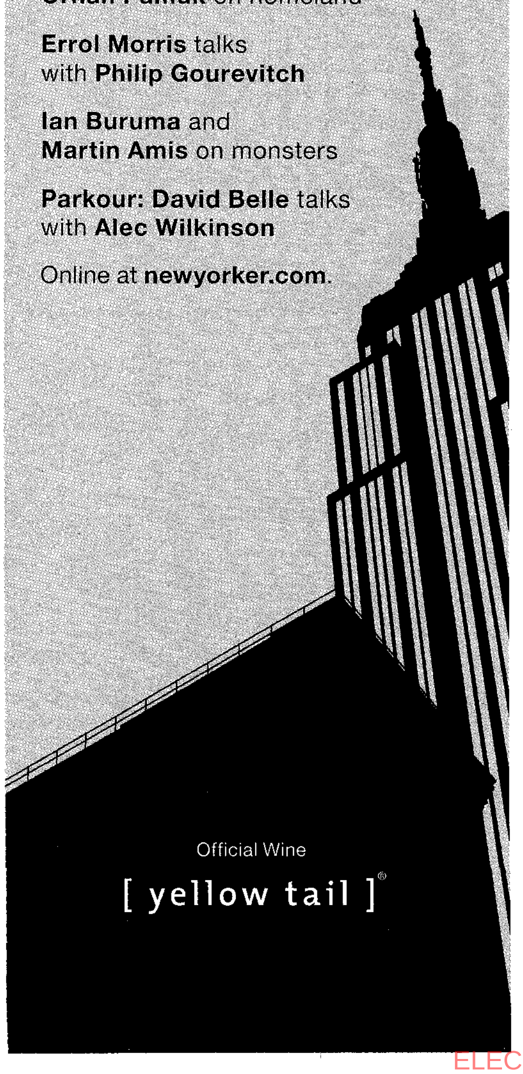

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PROFILES

COOGAN'S BLUFF

Britain's reigning king of the comedy of embarrassment.

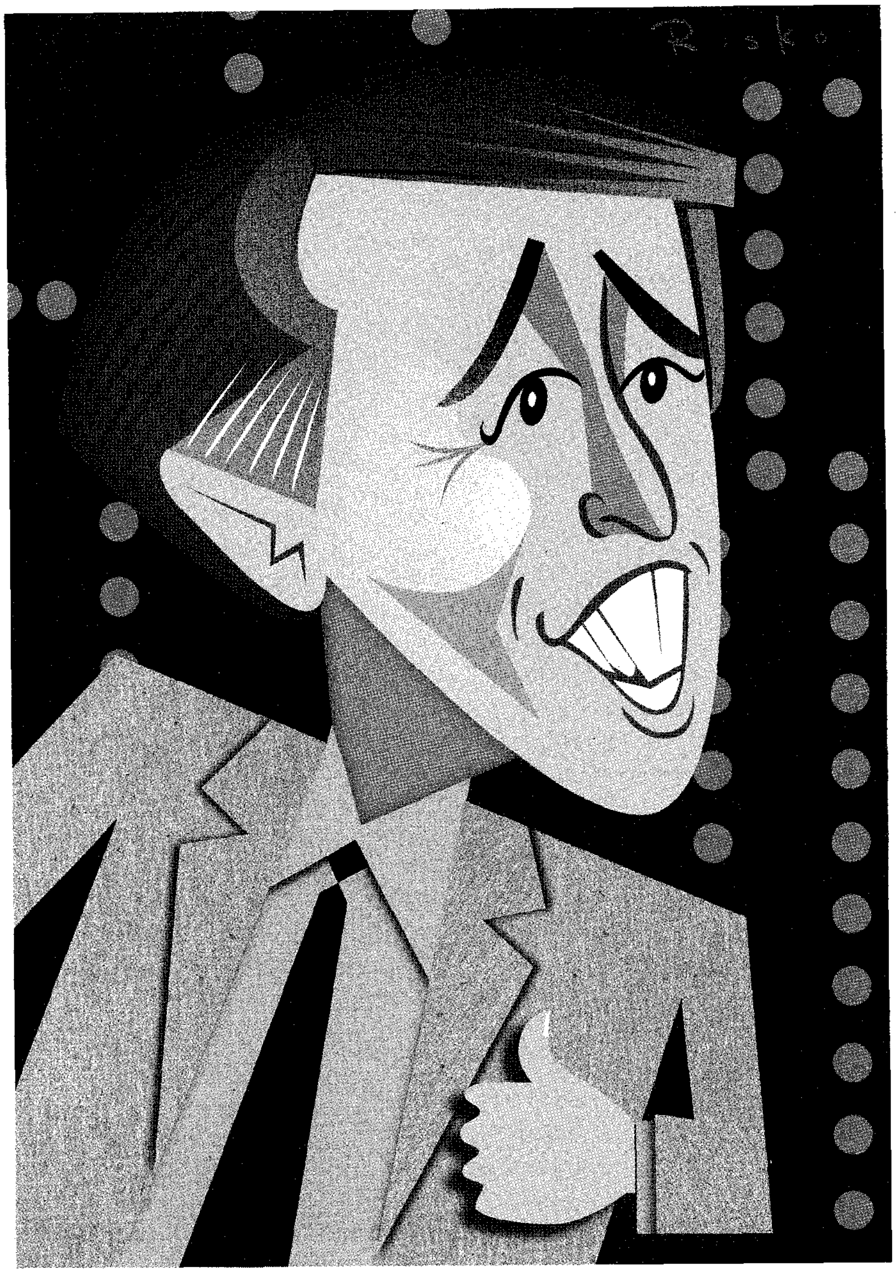
BY JOHN LAHR

On a sweltering morning in mid-March, three executive producers for HBO's "Curb Your Enthusiasm," David Mandel, Alec Berg, and Jeff Schaffer, lolled around in shorts at the patio table of a Malibu beachfront house waiting for the actors to arrive so that the day's shooting could begin. All were graduates of the *Harvard Lampoon* and of "Seinfeld." A month earlier, they had put the British comedian and actor Steve Coogan up for the role of Dr. Bright, a psychiatrist whose advice lands Larry (Larry David), the antihero of "Curb Your Enthusiasm," in a world of woe with his wife, Cheryl (Cheryl Hines), in the penultimate episode of the sixth and possibly final season of the series, which airs November 4th. It was a meatier role than most guest appearances, and the producers had been hoping, according to Schaffer, to "get someone great." They were all Coogan fans. Larry David, however, knew nothing about him.

In 2005, "The Comedian's Comedian," a British television special, asked more than three hundred respected comedy professionals worldwide to rank their favorite comedians. Coogan came in at No. 17, just ahead of Charlie Chaplin (No. 18), just behind Peter Sellers (No. 14), and well ahead of many more famous figures, such as Eddie Murphy (No. 32), Bill Cosby (No. 47), and Mel Brooks (No. 50). (Larry David was No. 23.) The forty-two-year-old Coogan is, in some ways, a British version of Larry David. He has captivated British audiences for more than a decade, with a run of enormously successful television series which are the kind of high-water marks of comedy in Britain that "Seinfeld" (for which Larry David co-wrote sixty episodes) and "Curb Your Enthusiasm" are for American viewers.

In his shows, Coogan, like David, has accentuated the negative and explored the comedy of embarrassment. He specializes in creating characters, not jokes. Each comic persona has a distinct world view, a unique idiom, and a richly imagined backstory. Coogan's humor often trades on the almost Oriental complexity of the British class system, which means that his most memorable characters—the beer-swilling Mancunian slacker Paul Calf and his sluttish sister Pauline, for instance—don't always travel well beyond the borders of the British Isles. ("It really bugs me," Paul Calf said in one routine. "They say, 'Oh, David Beckham—he's not very clever.' Yeah. They don't say, 'Stephen Hawking—shit at football.' ") In Britain, however, they are household names, as much as Jerry, George, Elaine, and Kramer are here. If you were alive in England in the nineties, Coogan's character Alan Partridge was one of the cultural icons by which you measured time, a Malvolio of media personalities, on a direct line of wit between Basil Fawlty and David Brent. A hapless talk-show host demoted to radio d.j., Partridge was mean-spirited, self-aggrandizing, status-seeking, forever tempest-tossed in the Sea of Me. He was also a fun-house reflection of Tory Britain, the ultimate Thatcherite Middle Englander. His three series on BBC2 riveted the country from 1994 to 2002, attracting as much as twenty per cent of the audience share and selling more than half a million DVDs.

For a few years now, Coogan has been sowing the seeds of a successful acting career as well. He is the only British comedian since Dudley Moore to make significant inroads into the movie market, with fine performances in such films as Jim Jarmusch's "Coffee and Cigarettes" (2003), Michael Winterbottom's "24-Hour Party People" (2002) and "A Cock and Bull Story" (2005), and Sofia Coppola's "Marie Antoinette" (2006), as well as some not so fine outings in such big-budget Holly-



Steve Coogan is, in some ways, a British version of Larry David.

ROBERT RISKO

wood movies as "Around the World in Eighty Days" (2004) and "Night at the Museum" (2006).

By Coogan's second day on the set of "Curb Your Enthusiasm," according to Mandel, "it was just like he's one of the regulars. It's very simple to see when Larry's having fun." Mandel was holding the day's script—a single piece of paper with seven typed lines—which gave the basics of the plot that Coogan, David, and Hines would flesh out through improvisation over the next eight hours: Larry, in an effort to get himself out of the doghouse with Cheryl, who has moved to a rental in Malibu, takes Dr. Bright there and tries to persuade him to accept the blame for everything that has gone wrong. As the crew positioned the lights around the wicker living-room furniture and adjusted the curtains of the bay window overlooking the glassy Pacific, Coogan, in conservative psychiatrist garb—blue gabardine suit, suède shoes, and glasses—milled around the set in a kind of focussed, anonymous solitude.

Once the actors had blocked out the scene, he and David began to improvise an argument about who should take responsibility for David's marital crisis. "I'm taking ninety per cent of the blame," Coogan said. "I'm asking you to take ten per cent." David refused; mayhem ensued. After each take, the writers huddled around the actors and rearranged the syntax of the scene, clarifying ideas, cutting excesses, adjusting words, resetting props, and debating character points. Gradually, they built up a grammar and a rhythm for the exchange. Around the fifth take, as the argument about Dr. Bright's percentage of responsibility escalated, David began to crack up in the middle of the scene. Two or three times, he started to speak, then collapsed in guffaws. "I'm so sorry," he said more than once. On the sixth take, Coogan's exasperation—"I take one hundred per cent!"—set David wheezing like a tire deflating. He covered his face. "I can't help it," he said. On the seventh take, Coogan nailed it. He spoke of Larry as being under his "auspices"—a pompous term that somehow captured the preposterousness of the man and his situation. "That was pretty wonderful," Mandel said, under his breath, and called, "Cut."

During a break, David noticed me scribbling on my notepad and sashayed over. "Why did I let you on the set?" he asked, then dictated, "Larry David looked pensive before the shot," and headed off with a pensive look on his face. I asked him what was so funny about Coogan. "He's just got a funny way," he said, turning back. "When he started yelling, I hadn't heard him yell before. That really made me laugh. I cannot keep a straight face when people yell at me on the show. In life, of course, I cower." David went on, "He plays confusion and ineptitude very well." Schaffer added, "Steve's able to get a lot of comedy on reactions. He's skilled enough to know that he's gonna get huge laughs by saying nothing."

Coogan seemed almost embarrassed to be the focus of attention on Larry David's set. "It's someone else's show," he said at the lunch break. "I want to do interesting stuff without overwhelming." While he waited for a van to take him to his trailer, a couple of miles down the Pacific Coast Highway, he said, "I find it quite inspiring. It's like playing tennis with someone who's really good. It raises your game." Even when he climbed into the van beside David, Hines, and the producers, who were heading to a local sushi restaurant, he maintained a polite, almost shy reserve. David was talking about his diet, about Coogan's comedy, about something that the character George had said on "Seinfeld." The van swung into the show's base camp to drop Coogan off. "I respect you all. Goodbye," he said as he got out.

A KOSMOS

You lay in your last sleep, not-sleep,
head tilted stiffly to the right on the pillow
at a sharper angle than when you bent over poems,
year after year, and we plucked at each other's lines,

as if now you considered some even starker question.
Your I.V. tubes were gone. Your arms were bruised.
A blue cloth cap enfolded your pale, bald head.
It was too late to give you the lavender shawl I'd imagined

more for my sake than for yours.
Your mouth was suddenly tender, the mouth of a girl.
You had come very far, to come here.
Never one not to look at things squarely,

now you looked inward. Who knows what you saw.
And when, weeks later, we gathered
again at the house to say those formal farewells,
I went up to your study looking for "Leaves of Grass"

and found, instead, your orderly desk, unused,
your manuscripts neatly stacked, the framed
photographs of your girls, and, like a private message
from Whitman, who saw things whole, the small

dried body of a mouse. A kosmos, he, too. He, too, luckier.

—*Rosanna Warren*

"The spirituality of imperfection is what interests me," Coogan said of his comedy. In life, Coogan's imperfections have landed him, variously, in therapy, in rehab, and in the British tabloids, where he regularly sees himself depicted as a Viagra-gobbling, coked-up libertine with a sweet tooth for threesomes. In 1996, Coogan's four-year relationship with the lawyer Anna Cole ended—six months before their daughter, Clare, was born—after tales surfaced of his bedding another woman on a mattress covered in ten-pound notes. In 2002, Coogan hosted "a bevy of lap dancers" in his hotel room. "I was appalled and shocked to find out they were lap dancers," he said, when tabloid newshounds confronted him. "I was under the impression that they were Latvian refugees who needed shelter for the night." In 2004, another hotel-room jamboree with lap dancers was one of the more sensational indiscretions that put paid to his two-year marriage to the society beauty Caroline Hickman. In 2005, the singer Courtney Love claimed to have got pregnant during a brief affair with Coogan. (Coogan denies this.) This summer, in response to a suicide attempt by his friend the actor Owen Wilson, Love put Coogan back in the tabloids, characterizing him as a kind of Devil's henchman who had somehow pushed Wilson over the edge. ("It's horseshit," Coogan said. He had been filming in Hawaii for six weeks and hadn't even seen Wilson since the previous January.)

Through the years, Coogan has come to believe that everything problematic about himself—his fears, his vanities, the public saga of his sexual misadventures—is also part of the solution, something he can exploit quite directly in his performances. "I've seen myself in my personal life behaving like an idiot *and* thinking, This will be quite useful," he said. "If I see something I've done that's funny, I will laugh out loud like I'm watching a character that's been created." He co-opts his own flaws in his work, he said, in order to deny "other people ownership of things that might make me vulnerable. To me, it's a battle of wits. You can't pretend you don't have that baggage, so the best thing to do is just use it all. The older one gets, laughter becomes the only available option." As Oscar Wilde observed, to become a "spectator of one's own life . . . is to escape the suffering of life." Coogan displays a certain detachment when he's not performing, a kind of polite vagueness. He can't do "big emotional things," his producing partner, the comedy writer Henry Normal, told me. "What comes out is often just the tip of the iceberg. Somewhere within him, he feels disconnected from the world. Comedy is one way that he makes that connection. Part of what he's doing is reshaping the world so he can fit into it."

On another bright day in March, I visited Coogan in Hove, a genteel annex of Brighton where he and his current co-writer, Neil MacLennan, were thrashing out the story lines for the second season of Coogan's latest series, "Saxondale," which was scheduled to begin shooting in June. (The first season was shown here on BBC America last year.) In the distance, the brackish Channel threw off glints of light; seagulls sunbathed on street signs beside Coogan's house, where the blinds of the front windows were drawn. Except for the gray Porsche parked in the driveway, there was nothing showy about the place or, when he finally answered the door, about Coogan himself, dressed in his usual mufti of jeans, cardigan, and T-shirt.

Coogan is thin, with a shock of graying, uncombed hair; offscreen, he seems subdued, at once guarded and restless. His house—which he moved into in 1999, though he spends a lot of his time in Los Angeles—revealed the single-minded focus of his transient life. In the spacious front rooms, boxes and racks of clothes waited to be sorted. Only his daughter Clare's room, its walls decorated with rainbows, a pink ballet skirt dropped like a grace note in the middle of the floor, showed any sense of life or order. Comedy is what gets Coogan's attention and—according to Henry Normal—

takes up ninety per cent of his waking time. "The other ten per cent are eating and going to the toilet," Normal said. "I don't think he has a day off unless he's forced to. Even if he has a day off, who knows what's going on in his head? He could be doing a sitcom about having a day off." (In 1999, Normal and Coogan together formed Baby Cow, now one of the biggest independent comedy production companies in Britain.)

A large Victorian desk with a leatherette top dominates Coogan's work room, but he rarely sits at it. He is a pacer. He doesn't write things down; he doesn't type; his gift is for improvising on his feet. "He's almost autistic," Normal said. "If he's trying to find a joke, you could set a fire next to him and he wouldn't notice." MacLennan, a large, genial, shaggy man with tired eyes, was at the desk with his laptop, poised to catch the sparks of the day's conversation and to keep Coogan's imagination from wandering too far off track. On the wall behind him, stretching from the fireplace to the ceiling, was a mosaic of color-coded Post-its, listing the plot points, character ideas, and key lines for each episode of the new season of "Saxondale" ("Regrets"—yellow, "Nostalgia"—turquoise, "Suicide"—blue). "It's been heavily compromised, because I ran out of colors," MacLennan said.

Tommy Saxondale, Coogan's most recent and most nuanced creation, is a former roadie turned pest exterminator, a man full of heroic gas, a combination of bombast and botched insight. He is also a potbellied, gray-haired projection of Coogan's own divided nature: a romantic contrarian struggling to come to terms with the confounding disappointments of adulthood and searching for ways to face down the uncertainties of the new century with a modicum of dignity. Each episode of the show begins with a session of an anger-management class that Tommy is taking. When, in one segment, the teacher argues that negotiation is better than conflict, Tommy responds, "Not always possible, is it?... Take the urban squirrel. I would like nothing better than to hammer out a negotiated settlement." But the squirrels in public parks, he says, have feasted on hidden crack cocaine and become violent, drug-crazed rodents:

> I have seen a squirrel with my own eyes punch a pit bull terrier on the nose. Say what you want about anger management. But, if it's between me and a crack squirrel, I would take that squirrel down. I would take that squirrel down to Chinatown.

"I connect with his anger and frustration and his preponderance to pontificate endlessly," Coogan said. "I'm a bit insecure. That's fine. I just give it all to Tommy." He glanced out the window at his walled garden—a large square of lawn dominated by an apple tree with a picturesque wooden swing. On one side of the property, below a vegetable patch of peas, runner beans, spring onions, and radishes, was a covered swimming pool; on the other was the Sussex County Cricket Club. "There's great ambient sound around here," MacLennan said, referring to the "oohs" and "aahs" that emanate from the cricket matches. Coogan chimed in: "I find it very easy to work when I can hear the background noise of polite applause.... He said ironically, knowing it was funny."

Coogan propped himself against the mantelpiece to scrutinize the Post-it notes detailing the episode that he was working on. In it, Tommy is fined for riding a train without a ticket, even though he offers to pay. "This happened to me," Coogan said. Refusing to pay the fine as a matter of principle, Tommy insists on defending himself in court. Coogan and MacLennan began work on his courtroom defense. Coogan offered, "Should he start his speech saying, 'Mark Twain once said . . .'? I just wonder what's funniest. Is there a more pretentious person? William Wilberforce? That might be too pretentious. Someone whose name is loaded with the righting of wrongs and injustice . . . Mahatma Gandhi."

"Nelson Mandela," MacLennan suggested.

But Coogan had already settled on Gandhi. "Some people might say, How can you compare nonpayment of a ticket to a British railroad station—Stevenage railway station—with Mahatma Gandhi's passive resistance?" he began, in character. "Some people might regard that as ridiculous, even deeply pretentious. But this is why it's not."

Coogan improvised and tested; MacLennan challenged and transcribed. The pas de deux went on for an hour and a half. Finally, they took a tea break, and Coogan settled onto a black leather sofa. "I like doing someone who's got a few neuroses," he said. "The dysfunctional side of your personality is always funnier. It's kind of a double bluff. I like the idea of people thinking, Is he really that bad?" He added, "When I say things as Tommy Saxondale, it's sometimes me just getting things off my chest. We all talk crap and do stupid things sometimes."

Coogan's characters are, in a way, his confessional. His longtime friend and collaborator the playwright Patrick Marber told me, "The difference between Steve and a lot of celebrities is he feels a bit guilty about it all. There's an urge in him to be a good family man and a good boy." Coogan, who was born in 1965, grew up in Middleton, just north of Manchester, in a lower-middle-class Catholic family, and, according to Anna Cole, "his Catholic upbringing is a huge part of who he is." His parents, Tony and Kathleen, an I.B.M. engineer and a housewife, were progressive Catholics; in addition to their own six children (Steve is the fourth) and an adopted daughter named Maria, they took in a series of foster children throughout his childhood. In the liberal, vivacious Coogan ménage, the children all vied for the attention of their parents, who were not "particularly demonstrative," Coogan said. "You couldn't get a lot of their time." He used to run home from school during recess "to sit with my mum and chat about things, just to get an hour on my own with her."

"We're a family that puts a high value on being entertaining," Coogan's older sister, Clare, told me. Coogan was prepared to go to great lengths to make an impact. When he was twelve years old, he daubed himself with fake blood and wax skin "to make myself look like I was dead." Once, he made an effigy of a man and put it in the living room; the body was tricked out with a tape recording and lights. "When you went in the door, a light would come on, blinding you, and it would trigger the voice on the tape saying, 'Hello. Come in. Sit down. Do not attempt to see who I am,'" he explained. "My mum just went over and pulled the head off the effigy. I would do things like that all the time. My sister remembers me saying a lot, 'Look at me!' 'Watch me!' "

Throughout his school years, Coogan told me, his report cards all said the same thing: "chatterbox, tendency to dream, slow in his work." Coogan, who was introverted and anxious, said that his obsession with comedy was just one manifestation of being "in my own world a lot of the time." He was so dreamy that his aunt dubbed him Stevie Wonder. "In our family, I would say, he was the least confident," Clare said. "He was very aware of being humiliated. Very early on, he lived with not being brilliant, not being good-looking. If we'd been puppies, I think he would have been the runt of the litter."

Still, from the age of three, Coogan displayed a startling gift for mimicry; he'd wake his siblings up at night to make them guess the identity of his latest impersonation. "I was like a windup toy for friends," he said. When he was a twelve-year-old at Catholic grammar school, his older brother Martin—who was the first Coogan to win fame, as the lead singer of the Mock Turtles, and is now a Manchester d.j.—would pull Steve aside and command him to do impressions. Coogan's impersonations included Margaret Thatcher, Michael Crawford, Roger Moore, and Sean Connery. He could also mimic his schoolteachers; once he was even invited to lead an assembly as his housemaster, checking the students' dress and extemporizing on school issues. "I wasn't the class clown," he said. "I had my own sense of humor, which was a little bit élitist. When the teacher asked me to do that, I was reluctant. I didn't want to be a performing monkey, but I did do it. It was the only thing I was good at, to be honest."

Coogan grew up in a television generation; his influences were primarily British TV comedy—"Monty Python," "Porridge," "Steptoe and Son," "The Two Ronnies," "Morecambe and Wise." (The economy and eloquence of Northern workingmen's club comedy also had a significant influence on him.) Watching comedy shows was a family event and "quite formative to me," he said. "Parents and children all laughing—it's a unifying thing." In a time before VCRs, Coogan would use a tape deck to record comedy shows and play the dialogue back to friends. When there was no dialogue, he'd describe the action. "I used to get annoyed when I'd hear people telling the stories and not doing justice to the detail. The detail made it work for me."

By the time he finished school, enough people had told him that he should be on television that, he said, "I thought, Well, maybe I *have* got something." He had done badly on his A levels and had been rejected for a course in politics at Lancaster University. "I remember thinking, In every generation new people emerge—that's the natural order of things," he said. "I thought, Why can't I be part of that new generation? All those people must have started somewhere. I've got as good a chance as anyone. No baggage. No setbacks. I've got to try and do something. I'm not going to do it through academia."

At nineteen, Coogan auditioned for the London drama schools and was rejected by all of them. "I felt like an 'oik' from the regions," he said. "They cast a great silhouette, these young men and girls who came in, with inbuilt confidence." When he auditioned, later, for the Manchester Polytechnic, which offered a vocational course in drama, Coogan used that sense of intimidation to create a character called Duncan Thickett, a sort of whirlwind of ineptness. "Because I was doing a character, it gave me license," Coogan said. "I walked in with my books and dropped them all over the floor and scrabbled to pick them up like I was very nervous. I did a deliberate rendition of an incompetent, idiotic person trying to get into drama school." "He was gawky, with a strange laugh and big glasses," Martin Nestor, who was one of the two adjudicators, said. "We thought, We mustn't laugh, because he'll think we're laughing at him. For two or three minutes, we were genuinely fooled into believing that this young man was a candidate. Finally, he broke it off and said, 'My name is Steve Coogan and I've come to audition.' " Needless to say, he was accepted into the program.

Coogan began to realize—"almost overnight," he said—that what he'd perceived as his handicaps were actually virtues. "I knew what ordinary working-class people sounded like. I had a good ear. A lot of these people from middle-class backgrounds were confident but they didn't know how ordinary people spoke. I suddenly thought, I'm better than them at what I do. I felt like I had something." In order to get his Equity card, he started doing standup. At the time, there were no alternative comedy venues outside of London, so he worked the rowdy Manchester pubs, sometimes opening for his brother's band. He developed the habit of adding surreal scenarios to his impersonations: the pint-size comedian Ronnie Corbett in Vietnam, Sylvester Stallone as a social worker, Robert De Niro meets Alan Bennett. "I remember seeing him in Manchester and thinking he's too big for the crowd he's running with," Normal said. "They're aiming for the trees; he's aiming for the moon."

By the age of twenty-two, Coogan was earning a thousand pounds a night doing standup, as well as providing voices for the satirical TV puppet show "Spitting Image." Tapped as one of the up-and-coming generation of performers, he twice appeared in the Royal Variety Performance, where he shook hands with Prince Charles and Princess Diana. But his comic Waterloo came in 1990, when he was playing the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, with the comedian Frank Skinner supporting him. "He blew me offstage," Coogan said, anger still percolating in his voice at the memory. "We were sharing a flat in Edinburgh and the phone kept ringing. It was always for him. I was much better known than he was, but I was just doing impressions. 'Yeah, Steve Coogan—he does funny voices.' They were over me already, before my career had started." Coogan began to think of his impersonations as the theatrical equivalent of juggling, a trick that should be consigned to birthday parties. He hankered for the depth and richness of real characters. "I was very much aware that some of the more established people regarded me as lightweight," he said. "I was absolutely determined to redress it." He added, "I remember someone said to me, 'You're gonna have to pull a rabbit out of a hat, because you're flatlining.' "

In the end, he produced two rabbits. The first was a repertory of characters, which he developed with another Manchester Polytechnic graduate, the comedian John Thomson. In 1992, he took their show, "Steve Coogan in Character with John Thomson," to the Edinburgh Fringe. He also paid a cohort, Patrick Marber, to direct it. Marber, who became one of the most distinguished playwrights of his era, had yet to direct anything. Nonetheless, he was Coogan's second rabbit, a rigorous contributor to the depth, shape, and backstories of Coogan's characters. "We met at a very good time," Marber said. "I was a bit lost and sort of waiting to be a writer. Steve needed a director. We had a very fruitful four or five years, when we made a lot of radio and TV programs together."

Coogan closed the Edinburgh show with his new creation, Paul Calf, the philistine lager-lout. Calf came onstage with a beer in his hand, a mullet hairdo, and ash on his trousers. "I've got two bad habits: smoking and masturbation," he said. "I'm a twenty-a-day man—and I smoke like a chimney." The character immediately took off; so did Coogan. His show won the Edinburgh Fringe's Perrier Award for best comedy performance. "That was probably the most enjoyable award I ever got," he said. "When you're in the Edinburgh bubble, it seems bigger than the Oscar. Things happen in quick time. The first week, no one's heard of you; by the fourth week, you're a star." Throughout the hubbub, people kept asking Coogan if he was going to tour. "I'm working on a radio show," he'd answer, "with this new character, Alan Partridge." "A lot of people were saying, 'Don't bother with that. Get out on tour,'" Coogan said. He responded, "No, you don't know how good this is gonna be."

"All right, now see what happens when you turn the faucet off."

• •

Paul Calf owed his bawdry and his edginess to Coogan's working-class Manchester past. Alan Partridge was more ironic and subversive, the result of Coogan's keeping company in London with the university wits at the BBC. "On the Hour," the radio show he'd joined in 1990, was a lively spoof of broadcasting, a traditional British genre that offers bright young things a place to show their intelligence before they're old enough to know their minds. "I asked Steve if he could come up with the voice of a sports commentator," the writer and producer Armando Iannucci told me. "I said, 'Not an impression, just something generic.'" The voice he came up with was both generic and specific. "There were about five of us in the room," Iannucci said. "We all felt we knew this person. We knew that it was someone who had aspirations to be taken seriously in the entertainment industry. A little blank. A little bland. He had a slight inferiority complex, in that the news journalists looked down on him. He was trying to be professional, and yet behind it, if you prodded him, he would collapse." Almost instantly, according to Iannucci, Coogan's character was named: " 'He's an Alan,' somebody said. Someone else said, 'His surname is Partridge.'" A partridge is a small bird whose chest puffs out; self-inflation became the key to Alan's metabolism. He was at once thin-skinned, self-important, and stupid.

"Working with Iannucci was a revelation," Coogan said. "He really did reshape things for me. There was no set-up, no punch line. None of the comedy I did with Armando was structured in an orthodox way. It deliberately drove a coach and horses through the rules at every opportunity." He added, "I remember thinking, I've been looking for this all my life. We knew we were onto something."

It was Marber, who was also acting and writing for "On the Hour," who suggested turning Partridge into the host of his own radio talk show. At first, Coogan was unsure. "I went, 'I can't believe the character's good enough to sustain a radio show,'" he said. He thought of Partridge then as just a voice, and a somewhat crude one at that. But Marber prevailed; he titled Partridge's show "Knowing Me, Knowing You," with a wink to ABBA, one of Partridge's favorite bands. The format was three interviews—three eight-minute bits—and the first episode was performed before a live audience at the BBC's Paris Studios, in London, on March 14, 1992. Even though it was radio, Coogan decided to give Partridge a look. "I wanted the audience to buy into the conceit of the character," he said. "I went to Lillywhites at the top of Regent Street and bought some casual clothes"—a pink sweater with a golf logo, slacks, loafers—"and combed my hair in a funny way. That was sort of the birth of him."

From the show's first beat, Alan Partridge broadcast his powers of misperception, an almost unerring ability not to understand the import of what he was saying. "Those of you who know me from the world of sport will know that I like having a bit of a chat with brawny men on the rugby field," he began. "And having a bit of a chat with the soft, fair, waif-like, moist creatures you find in ladies' sports." As an interviewer, Partridge's spectacular lack of curiosity was matched only by his ignorance. With a fictional sex expert named Ally Tennant, Partridge discussed the female orgasm. "What is it?" he blurted. "I mean how, how... does... it... *manifest... itself?* What do you hear? When it... ?... Well, what is it?" The smooth-talking Tennant turned the question back on him. "Describe what happens when you achieve an orgasm," she said. Partridge replied, "No, no, no, no, no, no! O.K. Let's leave it there. It's over. Leave it. A great lady or a mad old trout. You decide. Ally Harris! Ally Tennant. Ally Tennant! Sorry, Ally, for getting your name wrong... but I hadn't heard of you before tonight."

Both easily humiliated and quick to take revenge, Partridge locked horns with a character identified as "Britain's greatest living novelist," Lawrence Camley, who was promoting his enormous novel "The Soul of Time." "First reaction to your book—don't drop it on me foot," Partridge said, before turning to his enthusiasm for Sherlock Holmes:

> ALAN: What I thought was great about Sherlock Holmes was that not only was he a super sleuth, he was also a hard worker. 'Cause not only did he go out and solve the crimes, he came home and wrote it all down. Fantastic. That's why I admire him.
>
> LAWRENCE: (Pause) Y-e-s. I... I've always thought it was a shame that Conan Doyle had to kill him off.
>
> ALAN: I think you'll find it was Moriarty that killed him.
>
> LAWRENCE: Yes, I know, but ultimately, of course, it was Conan Doyle.
>
> ALAN: No, it was Moriarty. Definitely.
>
> LAWRENCE: Yes, I know, in the books it was Moriarty. But, of course, the ultimate responsibility was Conan Doyle's.
>
> ALAN: Hang on. As far as I know Moriarty acted alone. Or did he?! This is interesting—you think that there was some sort of conspiracy involving this shadowy Doyle figure...
>
> LAWRENCE: No, no. I'm sorry, Alan. I'd like to let this go, but I really can't. Sherlock Holmes did not exist.
>
> ALAN: He did.
>
> LAWRENCE: Look, if he had existed, how would he have been able to describe in intimate detail the circumstances of his own death?
>
> (*Pause.*)
>
> ALAN: Um... The Nobel Prize for Literature. You never won it. What went wrong?

In 1994, "On the Hour" transferred to a television format titled "The Day Today," and Iannucci sat Coogan down with footage of sporting events and gave him a microphone. "Steve didn't really know much about sport," Iannucci said. "It kind of helped, because he's genuinely struggling to describe what he's seeing." Partridge's vacancy and his vamping were almost surreal. "The goalie has got football pie all over his shirt!" he boomed, commenting on stock footage during his countdown to the 1994 World Cup. At other times, as in a tone-deaf report on bobsledding, Partridge's banter became an extravaganza of bunkum:

> Ironic, really, to think I had Bob Sleigh in my class at school—a boy who had no interest in the sport whatsoever.
>
> This course actually reminds me of when I was tobogganing at the age of sixteen. I hit something and fell off. I was concussed. Hit a cat. No cats here, of course. The groundsmen are quite strict about not letting cats onto this course. If one of those things comes down on a cat, it doesn't stand a chance. A bit like standing on a wasp. Not pleasant, but it's gotta be done.

Coogan's own radio show, "Knowing Me, Knowing You," also made the jump to TV in 1994. Coogan seems to have recognized that his time had come. "The first night I met him"—in April, 1992—"he told me he was going to be famous," Anna Cole said. About six years after that conversation, in a Manchester kebab shop, Coogan and his younger brother Brendan found themselves in a fistfight with some locals over a misunderstanding about a girl. "I remember grabbing the guy's head and banging it on the floor," Coogan said. "As I stood up, the guy I'd been on top of said, 'Are you Steve Coogan?' I said, 'Yes, I am.' He went, 'I've got your DVDs.' I ended up signing my autograph for him."

In the course of three television series, Alan Partridge went from national television talk-show host to local d.j., his shrinking workplace a metaphor for his tragicomic collapse. "That was 'Big Yellow Taxi,' by Joni Mitchell," he said, in the first episode of the TV series "I'm Alan Partridge." He was speaking between songs on Radio Norwich—a provincial city's "third-largest radio station"—at 4:35 A.M. Partridge went on:

> A song in which Joni complains that they've paved Paradise to put up a parking lot. A measure which actually would have alleviated traffic congestion on the outskirts of Paradise. Something which Joni singularly fails to point out, perhaps because it doesn't quite fit in with her blinkered view of the world.

Divorced, with two children who evinced no interest in seeing him, Partridge inhabited a sensational isolation of his own making, which was reinforced by his room-emptying prejudices, his patronizing attitudes toward women, and his appalling taste. (He was a fan of the death penalty, the right-wing tabloid the *Daily Mail*, and Paul McCartney's group Wings—"the band the Beatles could have been.") Unfulfillment was Partridge's terrain and also the source of his humor.

The closer Coogan got to spoofing himself, the funnier he was. "I would say things as myself and the writers would say, 'That's funny,' " he said. "I would go, 'I wasn't trying to be funny. I was just being me.' They would go, 'Yeah, but what you said sounded funny, so just have Alan say it.' " "As a person, he's not cool," Cole told me. "A lot of that comes out in the characters. He used to wear so much aftershave lotion when I first met him that sometimes you could hardly breathe. He's like a Northern boy come down to the big city." Iannucci said, "Were it not for the fact that he has this fantastic gift for comedy, Steve is fundamentally a guy who reads a lot of car magazines." (Cars, inevitably, were defining possessions for Partridge.)

After the series ended, in 2002, Partridge resurfaced in 2003 in a TV special, an homage to his career; in 2005, he made a charity appearance. As a character, he is now resting, but there is a chance of his cinematic resurrection. Recently, Coogan pitched the idea of a movie in which Partridge is held hostage at the BBC after a terrorist takeover and tries to work out a peace settlement. "Your position is you want to destroy the West," Coogan said, launching into Partridge's imaginary negotiation. "The West's position is, broadly speaking, they don't want to be destroyed. Is there a midway between those two positions that could satisfy us both? Rather than suicide bombings, you achieve so much more with a sternly worded letter." Coogan added, of the movie, "Part of me wants to do it, part of me wants to do other things. If I did something else that caught the public in a high-profile way, then I'd feel more able to go back."

I saw Coogan one last time, on a gray, chilly day in early June, as he emerged from a run-down Ministry of Defence building about forty-five minutes south of London, where the "Saxondale" production was headquartered. It was 8:15 A.M., on the first day of shooting; Coogan, who had been up since five, walked out as Tommy Saxondale. For all intents and purposes, he was a completely different person. He'd been aged ten years. His smile was a shantytown of ragged yellow teeth; his hair was a wiry gray thicket; his paunch made him walk with a waddle. "I'm getting slimmer, Tommy's getting fatter," he said. Coogan's current girlfriend, the actress China Chow—the daughter of the restaurateur Michael Chow—appeared with coffee. She asked him, "Do you feel excited or scared?" Coogan said, "I don't feel either. I just feel ready. My blood pressure and my pulse drop when I start working. This is my comfort zone. It occupies everything in my head in a good way."

The morning was spent filming a series of scenes in which Tommy tries to persuade his suicidal friend Martin (Kevin Eldon) not to throw himself off a roof. Tommy is a combination of big-hearted concern and bluster. "If it's the middle of the night and I'm fast asleep, I want you to shin up the drainpipe and hammer on me window," he tells his morose friend. Martin takes him at his word. Four times, he comes to Tommy's door; each visit reduces Tommy's concern. In the course of the episode, Tommy moves from a twenty-four-hour open-door policy to suggesting only telephone contact, then only texting. Along the way, he dispenses Coogan's own prescription for fighting depression:

> You know, those demons in your head are just pests taking a dump on your mental carpet. And I'm gonna show them the door. I'll force-feed them a blood-thinning anticoagulant of good vibes until the dark thoughts die, screaming in agony in your head . . . in a good way.

Comedy, Coogan says, is a form of "self-medication." And "Saxondale" is a comic reflection on the existential challenge of his middle years. "Lack of introspection has been my problem," he told me. At lunch, on the top deck of a red London transport bus that had been turned into a canteen, he picked over his lamb cutlets. "I feel that I'm in a different place than I was two years ago, a much more calm, controlled environment," he said. "When you're young, you think, I'll just get over this hill and then everything will be on an even keel. Then you get used to the fact that, no, you're never gonna get to the point of equilibrium. All you do is move forward. That's what life is—being in motion."

When he was younger, driven first by ambition and then by the momentum of his fame, Coogan made time for work but not for life. "Why should I go around Europe? What's that gonna do? What's the dividend?" he said of his attitude then. He had a feeling, he said, "of not enjoying the moment, just going, 'Good. That's achieved. Next.' " Coogan knows that he needs to be "kept busy"; these days, however, he's often busy with things that he hasn't done before. He has taken up hiking; he goes on vacations, frequently renting a cottage in Ireland where he holes up by himself for weeks at a time, reading books. ("I'm a slow reader, so I get through, like, three," he said.) Recently, he made a cheese-and-onion pie, using vegetables from his garden, and served it to his daughter. "One of the proudest things I've achieved," he said.

Back on the set, in the front seat of Tommy's yellow Mustang, Coogan tried to improve his last line, the bravado of which was meant to mask Tommy's compassion fatigue. In the scene, Tommy tells Martin that he can come over if he gets depressed again. "You sure that's O.K.?" Martin asks. The script called for Tommy to reply, "Am I sure? Am I one hairy-arsed son of a bitch?" Coogan turned other options over on his tongue. "Am I sure? Was Jim Morrison a wanker? Was Ravi Shankar a sitar player?" he said. "Is Van Morrison a grumpy man?"

When I left the set, Coogan was still in the front seat of the car, running the scene. I remembered something he'd once said about the piquancy of performing: "It's like flying when you become someone else. It's very liberating. It's a very calm place to be. It's like curling up in a warm blanket. At those moments, life is very simple." ♦

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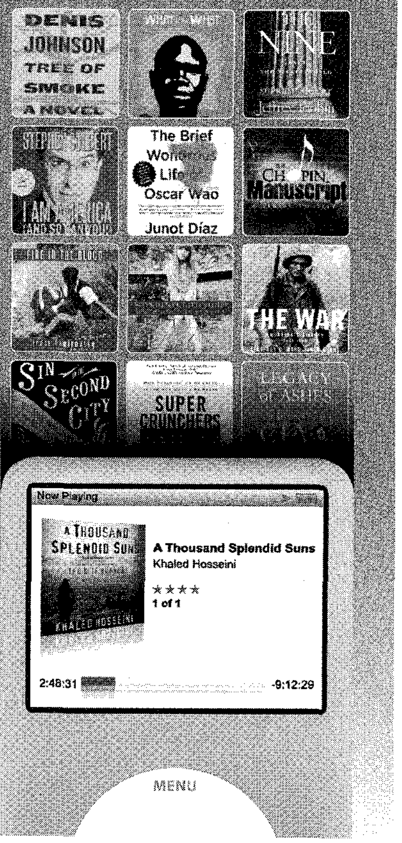

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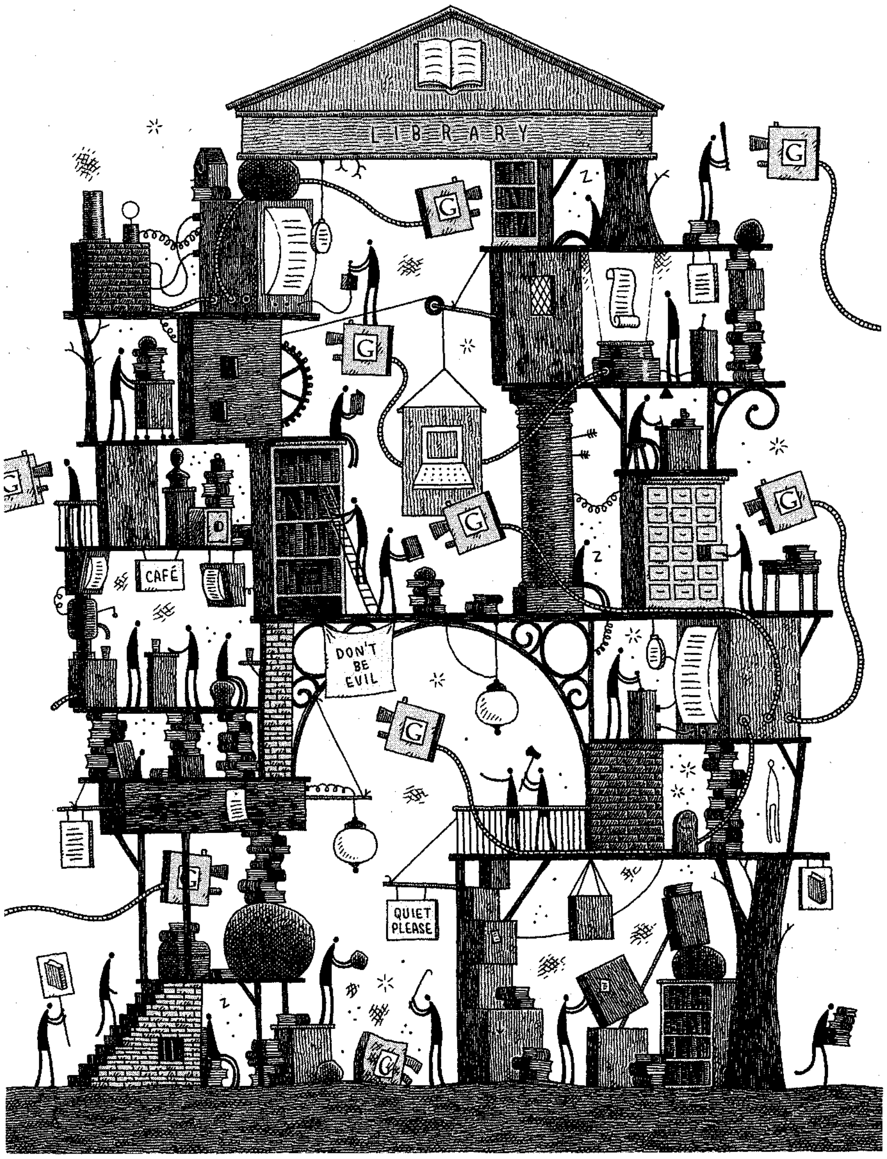
ONWARD AND UPWARD WITH THE ARTS

FUTURE READING

Digitization and its discontents.

BY ANTHONY GRAFTON

In 1938, Alfred Kazin began work on his first book, "On Native Grounds." The child of poor Jewish immigrants in Brooklyn, he had studied at City College. Somehow, with little money or backing, he managed to write an extraordinary book, setting the great American intellectual and literary movements from the late nineteenth century to his own time in a richly evoked historical context. One institution made his work possible: the New York Public Library on Fifth Avenue and Forty-second Street. Kazin later recalled, "Anything I had heard of and wanted to see, the blessed place owned: first editions of American novels out of those germinal decades after the Civil War that led to my theme of the 'modern'; old catalogues from long-departed Chicago publishers who had been young men in the eighteen-nineties trying to support a little realism." Without leaving Manhattan, Kazin read his way into "lonely small towns, prairie villages, isolated colleges, dusty law offices, national magazines, and provincial 'academies' where no one suspected that the obedient-looking young reporters, law clerks, librarians, teachers would turn out to be Willa Cather, Robert Frost, Sinclair Lewis, Wallace Stevens, Marianne Moore."



Some envision a universal archive—the basis for a total history of the human race.

TOM GAULD

It's an old and reassuring story: bookish boy or girl enters the cool, dark library and discovers loneliness and freedom. For the past ten years or so, however, the cities of the book have been anything but quiet. The computer and the Internet have transformed reading more dramatically than any technology since the printing press, and for the past five years Google has been at work on an ambitious project, Google Book Search. Google's self-described aim is to "build a comprehensive index of all the books in the world," one that would enable readers to search the list of books it contains and to see full texts of those not covered by copyright. Google collaborates with publishers, called Google Publishing Partners—there are more than ten thousand of them around the world—to provide information about books that are still copyright protected, including text samples, to all users of the Web. A second enterprise, the Google Library Project, is digitizing as many books as possible, in collaboration with great libraries in the U.S. and abroad. Among them is Kazin's beloved New York Public Library, where more than a million books are being scanned.

Google's projects, together with rival initiatives by Microsoft and Amazon, have elicited millenarian prophecies about the possibilities of digitized knowledge and the end of the book as we know it. Last year, Kevin Kelly, the self-styled "senior maverick" of *Wired*, predicted, in a piece in the *Times*, that "all the books in the world" would "become a single liquid fabric of interconnected words and ideas." The user of the electronic library would be able to bring together "all texts—past and present, multilingual—on a particular subject," and, by doing so, gain "a clearer sense of what we as a civilization, a species, do know and don't know." Others have evoked even more utopian prospects, such as a universal archive that will contain not only all books and articles but all documents anywhere—the basis for a total history of the human race.

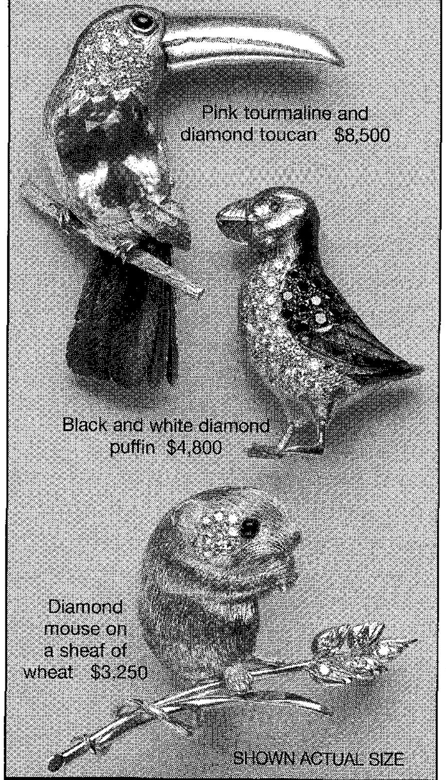
In fact, the Internet will not bring us a universal library, much less an encyclopedic record of human experience. None of the firms now engaged in digitization projects claim that it will create anything of the kind. The hype and rhetoric make it hard to grasp what Google and Microsoft and their partner libraries are actually doing. We have clearly reached a new point in the history of text production. On many fronts, traditional periodicals and books are making way for blogs and other electronic formats. But magazines and books still sell a lot of copies. The rush to digitize the written record is one of a number of critical moments in the long saga of our drive to accumulate, store, and retrieve information efficiently. It will result not in the infotopia that the prophets conjure up but in one in a long series of new information ecologies, all of them challenging, in which readers, writers, and producers of text have learned to survive.

As early as the third millennium B.C., Mesopotamian scribes began to catalogue the clay tablets in their collections. For ease of reference, they appended content descriptions to the edges of tablets, and they adopted systematic shelving for quick identification of related texts. The greatest and most famous of the ancient collections, the Library of Alexandria, had, in its ambitions and its methods, a good deal in common with Google's book projects. It was founded around 300 B.C. by Ptolemy I, who had inherited Alexandria, a brand-new city, from Alexander the Great. A historian with a taste for poetry, Ptolemy decided to amass a comprehensive collection of Greek works. Like Google, the library developed an efficient procedure for capturing and reproducing texts. When ships docked in Alexandria, any scrolls found on them were confiscated and taken to the library. The staff made copies for the owners and stored the originals in heaps, until they could be catalogued. At the collection's height, it contained more than half a million scrolls, a welter of information that forced librarians to develop new organizational methods. For the first time, works were shelved alphabetically.

Six hundred years later, Eusebius, a historian and bishop of the coastal city of Caesarea, in Palestine, assembled Christian writings in the local library. He also devised a system of cross-references, known as "canon tables," that enabled readers to find parallel passages in the four Gospels—a system that the scholar James O'Donnell recently described as the world's first set of hot links. A deft impresario, Eusebius mobilized a team of secretaries and scribes to produce Bibles featuring his new study aid; in the three-thirties, the emperor Constantine placed an order with Eusebius for fifty parchment codex Bibles for the churches of his new city, Constantinople. Throughout the Middle Ages, the great monastic libraries engaged in the twin projects of accumulating large holdings and, in their scriptoria, making and disseminating copies of key texts.

The rise of printing in fifteenth-century Europe transformed the work of librarians and readers. Into a world already literate and curious, the printers brought, within half a century, some twenty-eight thousand titles, and millions of individual books—many times more than the libraries of the West had previously held. Reports of new worlds, new theologies, and new ideas about the universe travelled faster and more cheaply than ever before. The entrepreneurial world of printing made much use of the traditional skills of learned librarians. Giovanni Andrea Bussi, a librarian of the papal collection of Sixtus IV, also served as adviser to two German printers in Rome, Conrad Sweynheym and Arnold Pannartz, who began printing handsome editions of classical texts, edited, corrected, and sometimes prefaced by Bussi. Like many first movers, Bussi and his partners soon found that they had overestimated the market, with disastrous financial results. They were not the last impresarios of new book technologies to experience this kind of difficulty.

Still, the model of scholars advising printers became normal in the sixteenth century, even if, in later centuries, the profit-driven industry of publishing and the industrious scholarship of the libraries gradually became separate spheres. Remarkably, this ancient model has been resurgent in recent years, as sales of university-press books have dwindled and the price of journal subscriptions has risen. With electronic publishing programs, libraries have begun to take on



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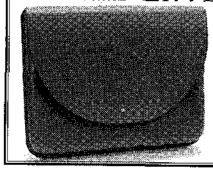

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many of the tasks that traditionally fell to university presses, such as the distribution of doctoral dissertations and the reproduction of local book and document collections—a spread of activities that Eusebius would have found natural.

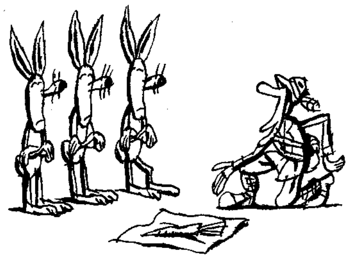
Fast, reliable methods of search and retrieval are sometimes identified as the hallmark of our information age; "Search is everything" has become a proverb. But scholars have had to deal with too much information for millennia, and in periods when information resources were multiplying especially fast they devised ingenious ways to control the floods. The Renaissance, during which the number of new texts threatened to become overwhelming, was the great age of systematic note-taking. Manuals such as Jeremias Drexel's "Goldmine"—the frontispiece of which showed a scholar taking notes opposite miners digging for literal gold—taught students how to condense and arrange the contents of literature by headings. Scholars well grounded in this regime, like Isaac Casaubon, spun tough, efficient webs of notes around the texts of their books and in their notebooks—hundreds of Casaubon's books survive—and used them to retrieve information about everything from the religion of Greek tragedy to Jewish burial practices. Jacques Cujas, a sixteenth-century legal scholar, astonished visitors to his study when he showed them the rotating barber's chair and movable bookstand that enabled him to keep many open books in view at the same time. Thomas Harrison, a seventeenth-century English inventor, devised a cabinet that he called the Ark of Studies: readers could synopsize and excerpt books and then arrange their notes by subject on a series of labelled metal hooks, somewhat in the manner of a card index. The German philosopher Leibniz obtained one of Harrison's cabinets and used it in his research.

For less erudite souls, simpler techniques abridged the process of looking for information much as Wikipedia does now. Erasmus said that every serious student must read the entire corpus of the classics and make his own notes on them. But he also composed a magnificent reference work, the "Adages," in which he laid out and explicated thousands of pithy ancient sayings—and provided subject indexes to help readers find what they needed. For centuries, schoolboys first encountered the wisdom of the ancients in this predigested form. When Erasmus told the story of Pandora, he said that she opened not a jar, as in the original version of the story, by the Greek poet Hesiod, but a box. In every European language except Italian, Pandora's box became proverbial—a canard made ubiquitous by the power of a new information technology. Even the best search procedures depend on the databases they explore.

From the eighteenth century, countries, universities, and academies maintained research libraries, whose staff pioneered information retrieval with a variety of indexing and cataloguing systems. The development of the Dewey decimal system, in the eighteen-seventies, coincided with a democratization of reading. Cheap but durable editions like those of Bohn's Library brought books other than the Bible into working-class households, and newspapers, which in the late nineteenth century sometimes appeared every hour, made breaking news and social commentary available across all social ranks.

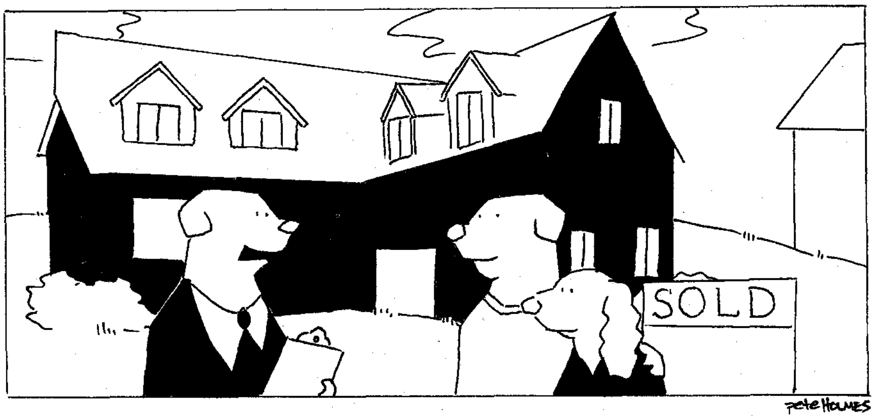
In the nineteen-forties, Fremont Rider, a librarian at Wesleyan University, prophesied that material was multiplying so quickly that it would soon overflow even the biggest sets of stacks. He argued that microphotography could eliminate this problem, and that, by multiplying the resources of any given library, it also offered the promise of truly universal libraries. As old universities expanded and new ones sprouted in the nineteen-fifties and sixties, generous funding enabled them to buy what was available on film or microfiche and in reprint form. Suddenly, you could do serious research on the Vatican Library's collections not only in Rome but also in St. Louis, where the Knights of Columbus assembled a vast holding of microfilm.

But the film- and reprint-based libraries never became really comprehensive. The commercial companies that did most of the filming naturally concentrated on more marketable texts, while nonprofit sponsors concentrated on the texts that mattered to them. No over-all logic determined which texts were reprinted on paper, which were filmed, and which remained in obscurity. Some efforts, like Eugene Power's STC project, which distributed on microfilm twenty-six thousand early English books, transformed research conditions in certain fields. Others simply died. As the production of books and serials exploded in the sixties, library budgets failed to keep pace. A number of reprint publishers ended up, like Bussi and his associates, drowning in unsold books. The venders of microfilm kept going—so efficiently, and enthusiastically, that they persuaded librarians and archivists to destroy large quantities of books and newspapers that could have been preserved.



The current era of digitization outstrips that of microfilm, in ambition and in achievement. Few individuals ever owned microfilm readers, after all, whereas many people have access to P.C.s with Internet connections. Now even the most traditional-minded scholar generally begins by consulting a search engine. As a cheerful editor at Cambridge University Press recently told me, "Conservatively, ninety-five per cent of all scholarly inquiries start at Google." Google's famous search algorithm emulates the principle of scholarly citation—counting up and evaluating earlier links in order to steer users toward the sources that others have already found helpful. In a sense, the system resembles nothing more than trillions of old-fashioned footnotes.

The Google Library Project has so far received mixed reviews. Google shows the reader a scanned version of the page; it is generally accurate and readable. But Google also uses optical character recognition to produce a second version, for its search engine to use, and this double process has some quirks. In a scriptorium lit by the sun, a scribe could mistakenly transcribe a "u" as an "n," or vice versa. Curiously, the computer makes the same mistake. If you enter *qualitas*—an important term in medieval philosophy—into Google Book Search, you'll find almost two thousand appearances. But if you enter "qnalitas" you'll be rewarded with more than five hundred references that



"Well, the down payment has cleared and the paperwork is filed—as soon as you pee on the lawn, the place is yours."

you wouldn't necessarily have found. Sometimes the scanner operators miss pages, or scan them out of order. Sometimes the copy is not in good condition. The cataloguing data that identify an item are often incomplete or confusing. And the key terms that Google provides in order to characterize individual books are sometimes unintentionally comic. It's not all that helpful, when you're thinking about how to use an 1878 Baedeker guide to Paris, to be told that one of its keywords is "fauteuils."

But there are even more fundamental limitations to the Google project, and to its competitors from Microsoft and Amazon. One of the most frequently discussed difficulties is that of copyright. A conservative reckoning of the number of books ever published is thirty-two million; Google believes that there could be as many as a hundred million. It is estimated that between five and ten per cent of known books are currently in print, and twenty per cent—those produced between the beginning of print, in the fifteenth century, and 1923—are out of copyright. The rest, perhaps seventy-five per cent of all books ever printed, are "orphans," possibly still covered by copyright protections but out of print and pretty much out of mind. Google, controversially, is scanning these books although it is not yet making them fully available; Microsoft, more cautiously, is scanning only what it knows it can legitimately disseminate.

Google and Microsoft pursue their own interests, in ways that they think will generate income, and this has prompted a number of major libraries to work with the Open Content Alliance, a nonprofit book-digitizing venture. Many important books will remain untouched: Google, for example, has no immediate plans to scan books from the first couple of centuries of printing. Rare books require expensive special conditions for copying, and most of those likely to generate a lot of use have already been made available by companies like Chadwyck-Healey and Gale, which sell their collections to libraries and universities for substantial fees. Early English Books Online offers a hundred thousand titles printed between 1475 and 1700. Massive tomes in Latin and the little pamphlets that poured off the presses during the Puritan revolution—schoolbooks, Jacobean tragedies with prompters' notes, and political pamphlets by Puritan regicides—are all available to anyone in a major library.

Other sectors of the world's book production are not even catalogued and accessible on site, much less available for digitization. The materials from the poorest societies may not attract companies that rely on subscriptions or on advertising for cash flow. This is unfortunate, because these very societies have the least access to printed books and thus to their own literature and history. If you visit the Web site of the Online Computer Library Center and look at its WorldMap, you can see the numbers of books in public and academic systems around the world. Sixty million Britons have a hundred and sixteen million public-library books at their disposal, while more than 1.1 billion Indians have only thirty-six million. Poverty, in other words, is embodied in lack of print as well as in lack of food. The Internet will do much to redress this imbalance, by providing Western books for non-Western readers. What it will do for non-Western books is less clear.

A record of all history appears even more distant. If you were going to make such a record available, as the most utopian champions of digitization imagine, you would have to include both literary works and archival documents never meant for publication. It's true that millions of these documents are starting to appear on screens. The online records of the Patent and Trademark Office are a boon for anyone interested in its spectacular panorama of the brilliance and lunacy of American tinkerers. Thanks to the nonprofit Aluka archive, scholars and writers in Africa can study on the Web a growing number of African records whose originals are stored, inaccessibly, elsewhere in the world. Historians of the papacy can read original documents of the early Popes without going to Rome, in a digitized collection of documents mounted by the Vatican Secret Archives. But even the biggest of these projects is nothing more than a flare of light in the still unexplored night sky of humanity's recorded past. ArchivesUSA, a Web-based guide to American archives, lists five and a half thousand repositories and more than a hundred and sixty thousand collections of primary source material. The U.S. National Archives alone contain some nine billion items. It's not likely that we'll see the whole archives of the United States or any other developed nation online in the immediate future—much less those of poorer nations.

The supposed universal library, then, will be not a seamless mass of books, easily linked and studied together, but a patchwork of interfaces and databases, some open to anyone with a computer and WiFi, others closed to those without access or money. The real challenge now is how to chart the tectonic plates of information that are crashing into one another and then to learn to navigate the new landscapes they are creating. Over time, as more of this material emerges from copyright protection, we'll be able to learn things about our culture that we could never have known previously. Soon, the present will become overwhelmingly accessible, but a great deal of older material may never coalesce into a single database. Neither Google nor anyone else will fuse the proprietary databases of early books and the local systems created by individual archives into one accessible store of information. Though the distant past will be more available, in a technical sense, than ever before, once it is captured and preserved as a vast, disjointed mosaic it may recede ever more rapidly from our collective attention.

Still, it is hard to exaggerate what is already becoming possible month by month and what will become possible in the next few years. Google and Microsoft are flanked by other big efforts. Some are largely philanthropic, like the old standby Project Gutenberg, which provides hand-keyboarded texts of English and American classics, and the distinctive Million Book Project, founded by Raj Reddy, at Carnegie Mellon University. Reddy works with partners around the world to provide, among other things, online texts in many languages for which character-recognition software is not yet available. There are hundreds of smaller efforts in specialized fields—like Perseus, a site, based at Tufts, specializing in Greek and Latin—and new commercial enterprises like Alexander Street Press, which offers libraries beautifully produced collections of everything from *Harper's Weekly* to the letters and diaries of American immigrants. It has become impossible for ordinary scholars to keep abreast of what's available in this age of electronic abundance—though *D-Lib Magazine*, an online publication, helps by highlighting new digital sources and collections, rather as material libraries used to advertise their acquisition of a writer's papers or a collection of books with fine bindings.

The Internet's technologies, moreover, are continually improving. Search engines like Google, Altavista, and HotBot originally informed the user about only the top layers of Web pages. To find materials buried in such deep bodies of fact and document as the Library of Congress's Web site or JSTOR, a repository of scholarly journal articles, you had to go to the site and ask a specific question. But in recent years—as anyone who regularly uses Google knows—they have become more adept at asking questions, and the search companies have apparently induced the largest proprietary sites to become more responsive. Specialist engines like Google Scholar can discriminate with astonishing precision between relevant and irrelevant, firsthand and derivative information.

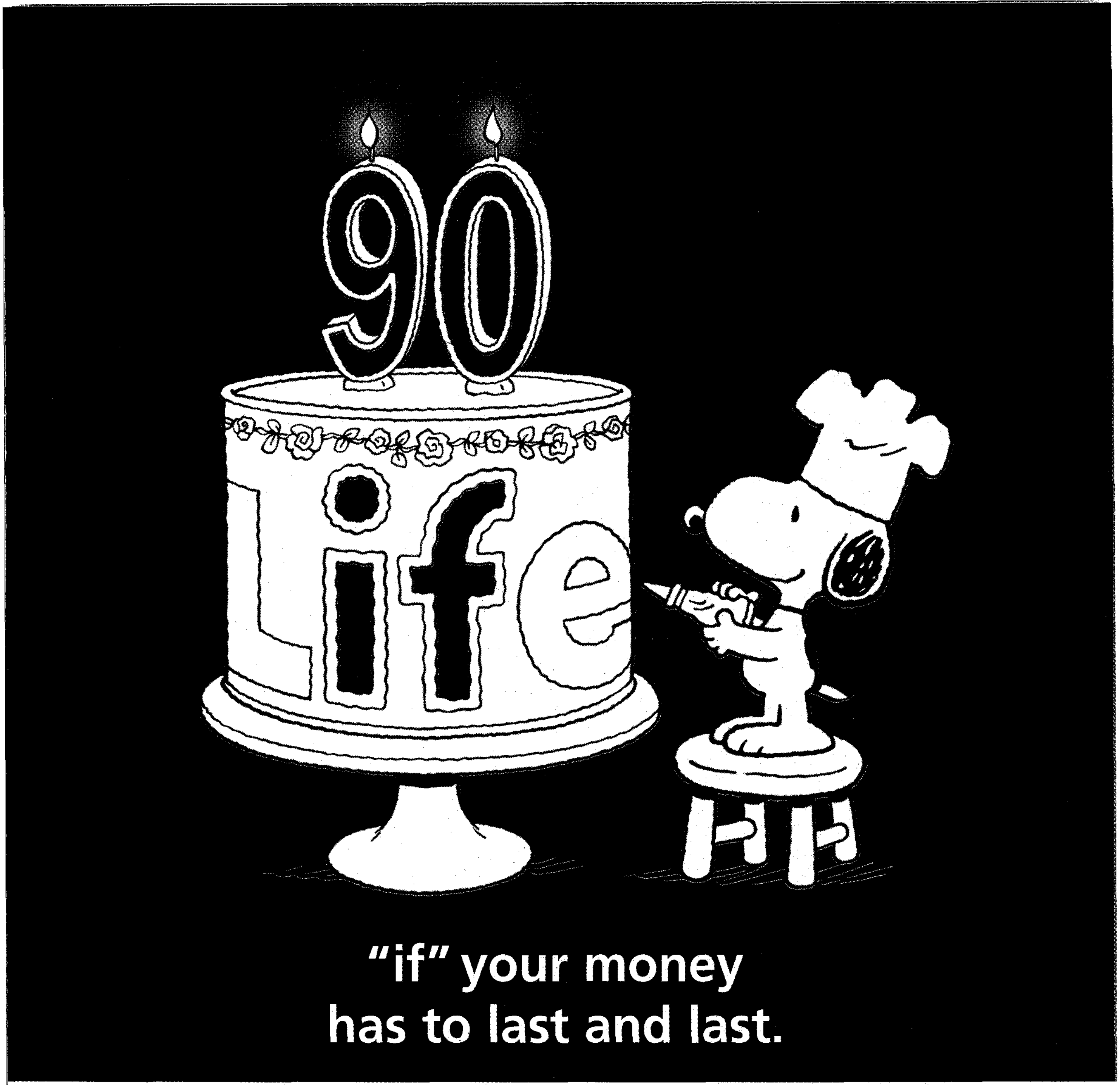
Alfred Kazin loved the New York Public Library because it admitted everyone. The readers included not only presentable young scholars like his friend Richard Hofstadter but also many wild figures who haunted the reading rooms: "the little man with one slice of hair across his bald head, like General MacArthur's . . . poring with a faint smile over a large six-column Bible in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, English, French, German," and "the bony, ugly, screeching madwoman who reminded me of Maxim Gorky's 'Boless.' " Even Kazin's democratic imagination could not have envisaged the hordes of the Web's actual and potential users, many of whom will read material that would have been all but inaccessible to them a generation ago.

And yet we will still need our libraries and archives. John Seely Brown and Paul Duguid have written of the so-called "social life of information"—the form in which you encounter a text can have a huge impact on how you use it. Original documents reward us for taking the trouble to find them by telling us things that no image can. Duguid describes watching a fellow-historian systematically sniff two-hundred-and-fifty-year-old letters in an archive. By detecting the smell of vinegar—which had been sprinkled, in the eighteenth century, on letters from towns struck by cholera, in the hope of disinfecting them—he could trace the history of disease outbreaks. Historians of the book—a new and growing tribe—read books as scouts read trails. Bindings, usually custom-made in the early centuries of printing, can tell you who owned them and what level of society they belonged to. Marginal annotations, which abounded in the centuries when readers usually went through books with pen in hand, identify the often surprising messages that individuals have found as they read. Many original writers and thinkers—Martin Luther, John Adams, Samuel Taylor Coleridge—have filled their books with notes that are indispensable to understanding their thought. Thousands of forgotten men and women have covered Bibles and prayer books, recipe collections, and political pamphlets with pointing hands, underlining, and notes that give insights into which books mattered, and why. If you want to capture how a book was packaged and what it has meant to the readers who have unwrapped it, you have to look at all the copies you can find, from original manuscripts to cheap reprints. The databases include multiple copies of some titles. But they will never provide all the copies of, say, "The Wealth of Nations" and the early responses it provoked.

For now and for the foreseeable future, any serious reader will have to know how to travel down two very different roads simultaneously. No one should avoid the broad, smooth, and open road that leads through the screen. But if you want to know what one of Coleridge's annotated books or an early "Spider-Man" comic really looks and feels like, or if you just want to read one of those millions of books which are being digitized, you still have to do it the old way, and you will have to for decades to come. At the New York Public Library, the staff loves electronic media. The library has made hundreds of thousands of images from its collections accessible on the Web, but it has done so in the knowledge that its collection comprises fifty-three million items.

Sit in your local coffee shop, and your laptop can tell you a lot. If you want deeper, more local knowledge, you will have to take the narrower path that leads between the lions and up the stairs. There—as in great libraries around the world—you'll use all the new sources, the library's and those it buys from others, all the time. You'll check musicians' names and dates at Grove Music Online, read Marlowe's "Doctor Faustus" on Early English Books Online, or decipher Civil War documents on Valley of the Shadow. But these streams of data, rich as they are, will illuminate, rather than eliminate, books and prints and manuscripts that only the library can put in front of you. The narrow path still leads, as it must, to crowded public rooms where the sunlight gleams on varnished tables, and knowledge is embodied in millions of dusty, crumbling, smelly, irreplaceable documents and books. ♦

NEWYORKER.COM
Anthony Grafton's tour of digital collections.



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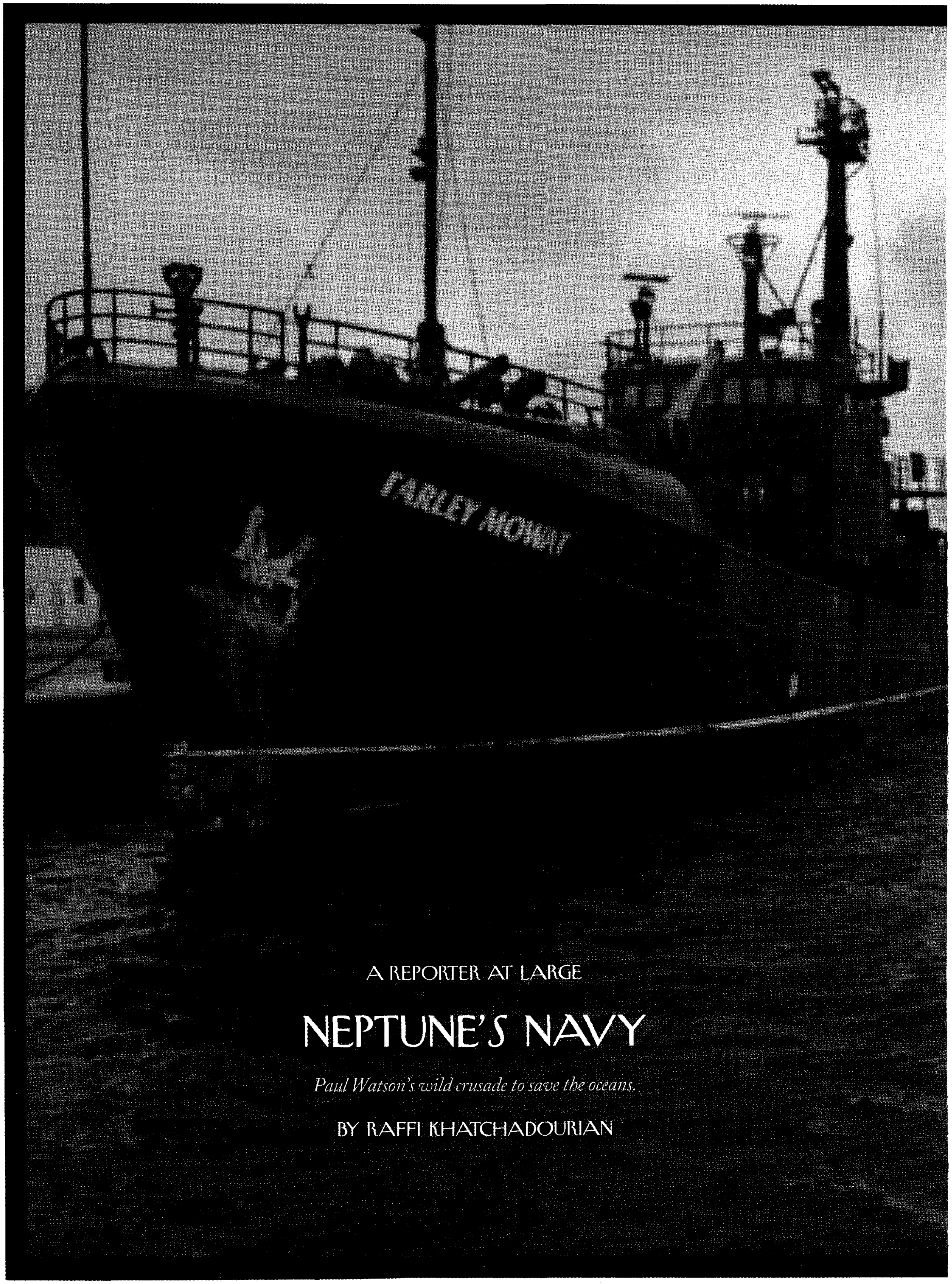


A REPORTER AT LARGE

NEPTUNE'S NAVY

Paul Watson's wild crusade to save the oceans.

BY RAFFI KHATCHADOURIAN

Watson, the founder of the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, a vigilante organization that was founded thirty years ago, with one of its shi

he Farley Mowat, a trawler that has nearly sunk three times. Photograph by James Nachtwey.

One afternoon last winter, two ships lined up side by side in a field of pack ice at the mouth of the Ross Sea, off the coast of Antarctica. They belonged to the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, a vigilante organization founded by Paul Watson, thirty years ago, to protect the world's marine life from the destructive habits and the voracious appetites of humankind. Watson and a crew of fifty-two volunteers had sailed the ships—the Farley Mowat, from Australia, and the Robert Hunter, from Scotland—to the Ross Sea with the intention of saving whales in one of their principal habitats. A century ago, when Ernest Shackleton and his crew sailed into the Ross Sea, they discovered so many whales "spouting all around" that they named part of it the Bay of Whales. ("A veritable playground for these monsters," Shackleton wrote.) During much of the twentieth century, though, whales were intensively hunted in the area, and a Japanese fleet still sails into Antarctic waters every winter to catch minke whales and endangered fin whales. Watson believes in coercive conservation, and for several decades he has been using his private navy to ram whaling and fishing vessels on the high seas. Ramming is his signature tactic, and it is what he and his crew intended to do to the Japanese fleet, if they could find it.

Watson is fifty-six years old, pudgy and muscular. His hair, which is white, often hangs over his eyes in unkempt bangs. During trips to Antarctica, he usually grows a beard or a goatee. On January 19th, the day he moored his ships together in the Ross Sea, he wore a black, military-style sweater adorned with Sea Shepherd patches, and a rainbow-colored belt that held a sheathed knife. Watson was captaining the Farley, a rusty North Sea trawler built in Norway in 1958. The ship, black with yellow trim, featured a skull and crossbones painted across its superstructure and, on the forward deck, a customized device called "the can opener": a sharpened steel I-beam that is propelled outward from the ship's starboard side and is used to scrape the hulls of adversaries. Watson's plan was to transfer as much furniture, equipment, and crew as he could from the Farley to the Hunter, in part because the Farley was old and barely seaworthy, in part because it was operating illegally and could be confiscated upon entry into port, and in part to ready it for a procedure that he called Operation Asshole—so named because it involved ramming one vessel into another's stern.

When Watson is separated from land, he tends to behave like Captain Nemo, which is to say that he does what he thinks is right, even if it involves a violation of custom or the destruction of property. There are a number of rules belonging to civilization that outrage his sense of morality, among them the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which asserts that sovereign states alone are the ocean's enforcers. If such rules interfere with his agenda, then, as far as he is concerned, rules be damned. This is particularly true when whales are at issue. Watson believes that whales are more intelligent than people, and that their slaughter is tantamount to murder. (He once compared their extermination to the Holocaust.) The Japanese take a different view. They have been hunting whales with a modern industrial fleet since the nineteen-thirties, and the more resolutely the rest of the world condemns their hunt the more adamantly their government seems to support it. Watson maintains that if his opponents are forced to defend their actions in public they will demonstrate the untenable nature of their position. A key part of his strategy is to force the issue.

Whaling is not banned, but it is not exactly permitted, either—an ambiguity resulting from political compromise and shortsightedness. In 1946, the world's major whaling nations formed the International Whaling Commission to manage the world's whale fisheries. It did a terrible job. By the nineteen-seventies, several species were nearing extinction, and by the early eighties the I.W.C. decided that commercial hunts should be halted. This is often referred to as the "ban" on commercial whaling, but it is more accurate to call it a moratorium. Even so, several leading whaling countries declined to abide by it. Whaling for the sake of science has always been permitted anywhere and without restrictions. The Japanese say that they are hunting whales off Antarctica in order to ascertain when there will be enough to harvest for profit. In the winter of 2005, they killed more than a thousand, nearly double the commercial catch of Norway, which rejected the moratorium. The Japanese fleet is run by the government-subsidized Institute for Cetacean Research, in Tokyo, but the institute has produced virtually no research of any regard, and all the whales that are purported to be under study are also butchered for the purpose of selling whale meat to the Japanese public.

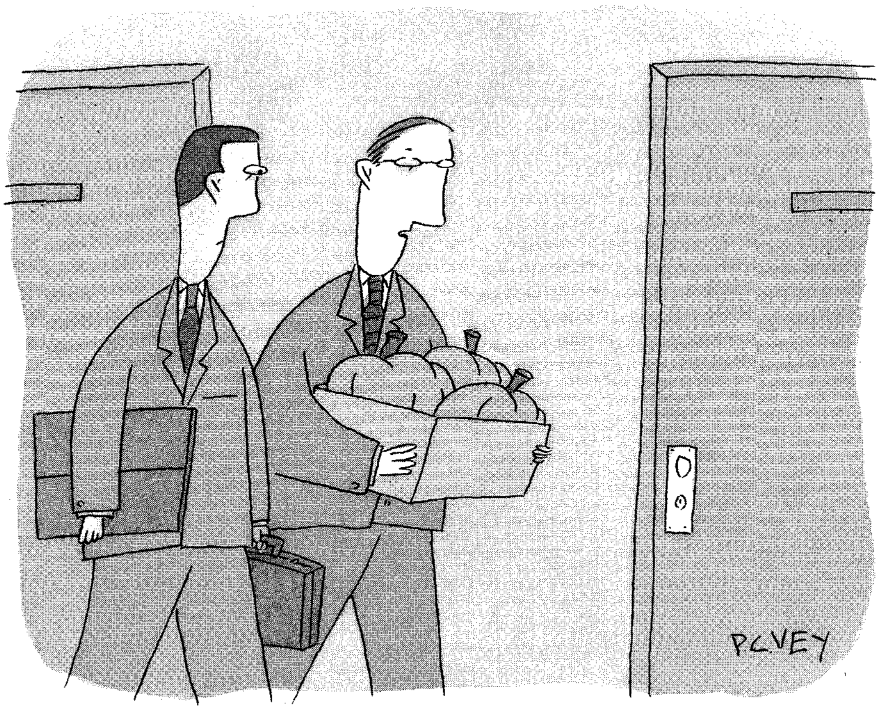
Watson has a tendency to see things in their essence rather than in their particulars. A diplomat might say that the Japanese whaling fleet is technically complying with the rules of the I.W.C., and that to stop it one must first upset the status quo that permits the fleet to hunt whales. Watson, who cannot be bothered with the legal nuances of international regulations, insists that the Japanese fleet is breaking the law, and that, because the I.W.C. refuses to act, he and his crew must. He calls his fleet Neptune's Navy, and he regards it as a law-enforcement agency. Moments before ramming a vessel, Watson will radio its captain and say something that sounds very official, such as "Please remove yourselves from these waters. You are in violation of international conservation regulations." At times, he loses his cool. "We're no protest ship," he once told an intransigent captain. "Now, get out of here." His sense of urgency, his impressive ego, his argumentativeness, his love of theatrics, his tendency to bend the truth, his willingness to risk lives or injury for his beliefs (or for publicity), and his courage (or recklessness) have earned him both loathing and veneration from those who are familiar with his activism.

Watson's celebrity supporters, some of whom he has come to know personally, include Mick Jagger, Pierce Brosnan, Sean Penn, Aidan Quinn, William Shatner, Edward Norton, Orlando Bloom, and Uma Thurman. In 1995, Martin Sheen travelled with Watson and other activists to the Magdalen Islands, in Quebec, to protest the clubbing of baby seals. The group was threatened by a mob of angry sealers, and Watson was badly beaten. "He's one of the gutsiest guys on the planet," Sheen told me. "I am just so grateful to him for his commitment and his courage and his daring and his humanity." Steve Wynn, the Las Vegas casino magnate, once helped Watson buy a submarine (though it was missing essential parts and so couldn't be used). John Paul DeJoria, the C.E.O. of John Paul Mitchell Systems, the hair-care-products company, has raised tens of thousands of dollars for Watson's campaigns. Sea Shepherd's board of advisers includes Elizabeth May, the leader of Canada's Green Party, and Roger Payne, one of the world's foremost experts on whales. Watson is portrayed as a savior in the fiction of Edward Abbey, the author of "The Monkey Wrench Gang" (1975), a seminal book for eco-saboteurs. The Dalai Lama has given him a written endorsement and a statue of Hayagriva, a wrathful deity who, according to early Buddhist texts, yells with a "dreadful voice" and "subdues all demons and all evils." Within the animal-rights community, Watson is treated like a demigod. "I think he's a hero," Peter Singer, the Princeton ethicist and the author of "Animal Liberation," told me. "He's been prepared to put himself on the line to stop the abuse of animals in places where no one else was prepared to go."

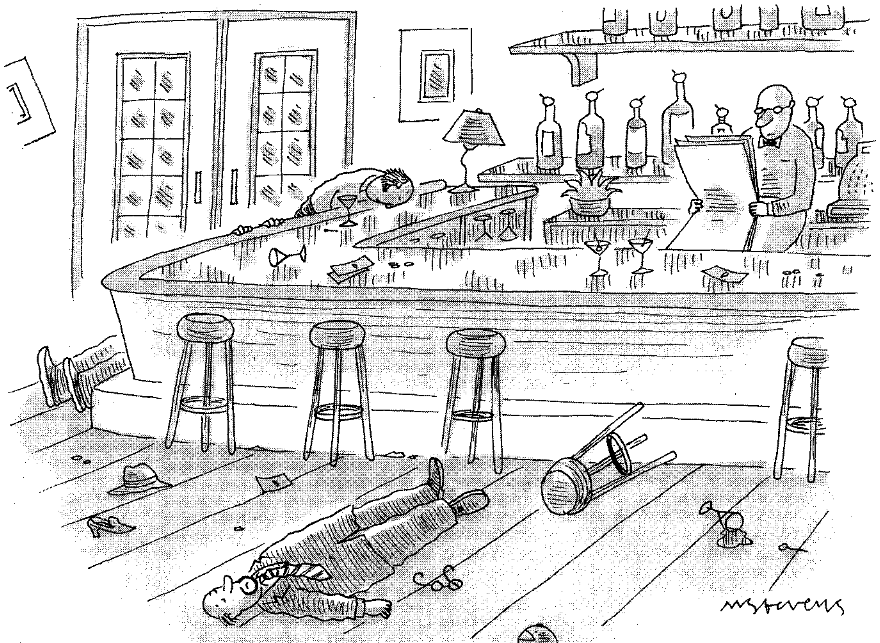
Watson's detractors are no less adamant. Officials in Iceland, Denmark, Norway, Japan, Canada, and Costa Rica have denounced him; some have even called him a terrorist. In the mid-nineties, Norway convicted him of attempting to scuttle a whaler named Nybræna, and he spent eighty days in prison. "He is persona non grata in Iceland," Kristján Loftsson, the managing director of Hvalur, Iceland's largest whaling company, told me. Watson has made enemies of other conservationists, too. For decades, Greenpeace has wanted nothing to do with him—a rebuke that is particularly stinging because he was a founder of the organization. Last year, Watson resigned from the Sierra Club's national board, after feuding with other members about the group's policies. He has been barred from I.W.C. meetings since 1986, when Sea Shepherd scuttled two of Hvalur's ships in Reykjavik's harbor—an act of sabotage that many conservationists believe helped turn Icelandic public opinion against the cause of saving whales. Sidney Holt, one of the principal architects of the whaling moratorium, told me, "I think his involvement in all this is an absolute disaster. Almost everything he has been doing has had blowback for those who want to see an end to whaling. In too many cases, playing piracy on the ocean, and creating danger for other ships, is simply not liked."

As the ships of Neptune's Navy were tied together in the Ross Sea, Watson stood on the deck of the Farley and observed his crew transferring equipment to the Hunter, a former Scottish-fisheries patrol vessel that was built in 1975. Watson's default temperament is one of detached amusement, and as he surveyed the work of his volunteers—most less than half his age, idealistic, loyal, zealously vegan—he told them, "You guys are like locusts." Sea Shepherd, which has an annual budget of about two million dollars, has a paid staff of fourteen people. Watson is committed to keeping his organization small, and does not believe in spending money on fund-raising or recruitment; he raises money by giving lectures and advertising Sea Shepherd's work on the Internet, and by appealing to donors, often celebrities, directly. He has no trouble staffing his ships with volunteers. The Farley's bridge was being stripped bare by a senior officer, a forty-one-year-old electrical engineer from Florida named Pedro Monteiro, who was dismantling redundant navigational equipment: an extra radar console, a global-positioning system. On the main deck, crew members using a crane transferred several tons of steel beams and plating to the other ship. The steel was to be used to construct a platform deck on the Hunter, and volunteers wearing welders' masks and gloves began building it almost immediately. On a similar deck at the Farley's stern, under a gray tarp, a Hughes 300c helicopter sat ready to conduct reconnaissance.

Watson had hunted for the Japanese whaling fleet here before: in 2002, he searched for weeks but didn't find it; in 2005, he sideswiped two Japanese vessels. This time, he faced a new predicament: hours after leaving Australia, the Farley, which had been registered in Belize, was stripped of its flag by the authorities there. (The Japanese government had been educating other countries about Sea Shepherd's activities.) Without a flag, a ship is considered stateless, which means that if it is attacked on the high seas no government is likely to defend it. The Farley, in effect, had become an outlaw ship—a cause for celebration by its crew. Sea Shepherd volunteers tend to share Watson's frustration with civilization, not



"I never know if pumpkins are right to bring to a meeting."



THE HOME OF THE BOTTOMLESS MARTINI

only for its relentless expansion into nature but also for the many compromises that come with life on land. As Watson once wrote, "No words can describe the personal liberation that heading seaward bestows upon me. In this aquatic realm no man or woman is subject to the petty decrees of social bureaucracy." From the bow, the ship flew a Sea Shepherd flag, a version of the Jolly Roger featuring a trident crossed with a shepherd's crook. Watson told his crew, "Now you're on a pirate ship."

On the high seas, the greatest danger that the Farley posed was to itself. Since 2002, it had nearly sunk three times. On two occasions, divers had had to repair breaches to the hull with wooden stakes to keep the ship afloat. ("Luckily, we weren't in a storm," a crew member recalled. "You can't send divers down when there are five-metre swells.") Watson reasoned that the best way for the Farley to end its days at sea was as a battering ram in the service of marine life. To succeed in this, though, the ship would have to overcome a crucial obstacle: speed. Its top speed was ten knots, nowhere near that of any of the Japanese vessels. The Hunter, a much faster ship, would have to delay the whalers until the Farley could catch up—assuming that the fleet could be found. The Institute for Cetacean Research harvests whales within the Southern Ocean Sanctuary, fifty million square kilometres designated a protected area by the I.W.C. With two ships and a helicopter, Neptune's Navy hardly had the advantage.

Weeks of searching followed the high-seas rendezvous. By early February, Watson told me, he was preparing to order his navy back to port. His ships were running low on fuel, and the mood among his volunteers was grim. ("Every day that passed, it got a little more dismal," a crew member recalled.) Then, on February 9th, a little before 4 A.M., the Hunter located a cluster of ships on its radar: an unusual pattern of blips moving across the console at 14.7 knots, faster than drifting icebergs. The sky was black. The air was cold. The Hunter's captain, Alex Cornelissen, could not see more than a few feet off the bow. He decided that before notifying Watson in the Farley, twenty-five miles away, he needed more information. He steered toward the closest blip and ordered the helicopter to investigate the largest. At dawn, the sky turned a dark shade of blue, and the helicopter's pilot saw a lighted ship moving slowly across the water. He radioed Cornelissen to say that he had located a whaler, and a crew member on the Hunter's bridge announced, "We have found the fleet."

The ship was the Nisshin Maru. A colossus at sea, more than four hundred feet long, it is what whalers call a "factory ship"—the only one still in operation. Other vessels deliver their catch to the Nisshin Maru for butchering, packaging, refrigeration, and study. For conservationists, it has come to represent everything that is wrong with the modern whale hunt: mechanized slaughter on a vast scale. Greenpeace crews have frequently sailed to the Southern Ocean to protest and document the fleet's work. The Institute for Cetacean Research has painted the word "research" in block letters across the ship's hull; the word is clearly propaganda, but for Neptune's Navy it serves as a taunt.

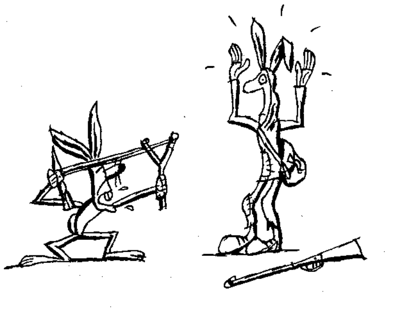
Around 6 A.M., the Hunter pulled alongside the Nisshin Maru. The whaling ship blasted its horns and turned on its water cannons, which sent powerful jets overboard. The two ships were close enough to collide, but Watson had instructed Cornelissen to delay the ship, not to ram it. On the Hunter's deck, crew members dressed in black uniforms, their faces covered by masks, began throwing cannisters of butyric acid—a relatively harmless substance that smells like rancid butter—and smoke bombs onto the Nisshin Maru's deck. At the waterline, motorized dinghies called Zodiacs arced around the whaler. Most of the Zodiacs had come from the Farley, which was not yet in visible range. Their crews carried cameras and prop-foulers—long knotted coils of polypropylene—which they hoped would get entangled in the Nisshin Maru's propellers. Other Zodiac crews were equipped with nail guns. They drew the dinghies beside the Nisshin Maru and nailed shut scuppers through which whale blood was released into the ocean. As the confrontation went on, the temperature dropped. Waves surged, and snow, driven by shifting winds, hit the ships at wild angles.

One of the Farley's Zodiacs disappeared in the storm. Its crew, Karl Neilsen and John Gravois, did not respond to radio calls. Watson stood against the back wall of the bridge, near an old brass pilot wheel, and bit his upper lip. "What?" he said in disbelief to Monteiro. Referring to Neilsen, the Zodiac's pilot, he asked, "He doesn't have flares? I don't know why he doesn't have flares." As the Farley began to search for the missing boat, Watson grabbed several flares, went to a bridge wing, and fired them into the air. Their light barely penetrated the fog and snow. He faced a difficult decision. Several miles away, the Hunter was harassing the Nisshin Maru, and if he ordered it to join the search for the Zodiac it would not reach the whaler again. He decided that the Hunter should stay on course. "A lot of people were freaking out," he recalled. "But the problem was that I didn't want the Japanese fleet to get away." Cornelissen was having trouble keeping up with the Nisshin Maru, which could move faster than the Hunter in rough seas, and after several hours he decided to disobey Watson's order and join the search. Watson issued a distress call on the radio, and, moments later, the captain of the Nisshin Maru responded, asking how he could help.

What Watson did not know was that the missing Zodiac was badly damaged. It was old and had not been well maintained, and it had slammed into a wave and cracked its hull. As water poured in, it shorted out the radio and the G.P.S. Neilsen and Gravois fell behind the other ships, and eventually found themselves alone in the storm. They were wearing wetsuits and, over their wetsuits, foul-weather gear, but, even so, they were cold, and in the event that they became fully submerged they would not have survived for very long. They steered the Zodiac toward an iceberg and took shelter beside it. The men could not climb out, because the ice surface was nearly vertical, and they huddled together for warmth. After four or five hours, the Zodiac began to drift away from the iceberg. Gravois wrestled with the possibility that he might freeze or drown at the bottom of the world. He saw and heard mirages: phantom ships, a nonexistent helicopter. Neilsen did what he could to keep the Zodiac from moving too far from its last known position. Finally, eight or nine hours after the men had fallen behind the fleet, the Farley appeared through a wall of fog and rescued them. The Nisshin Maru, which had joined in the search, escaped into the Antarctic storm.

Watson had no choice but to order Neptune's Navy to return to Australia. Fuel and supplies were nearly depleted. Some crew members were horrified that he had taken so long to issue a distress call. Others were thrilled by the encounter with the factory ship, convinced that taking life-threatening risks to save animals was central to Sea Shepherd's mission. On February 12th, as Neptune's Navy was preparing to leave the Antarctic Circle, the Hunter located another Japanese whaling vessel, northeast of the Balleny Islands. The ship, the Kaiko Maru, was what whalers call a spotter; it was looking for pods of whales near a field of pack ice. The Hunter rapidly closed in on it, and Cornelissen's first mate radioed the Japanese captain to say, "You have been identified as an illegal whaling vessel. We advise that you leave the Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary immediately."

As the Hunter and the Kaiko Maru negotiated the floes, they smashed into each other. The Hunter tilted port, at an angle close to thirty degrees, and veered into a block of pack ice; the impact caused some structural damage to the hull. The Kaiko Maru blasted a looped recording, in English, through loudspeakers on its bridge: "Warning! Warning! This is the Kaiko Maru's captain. Stop your obstructive actions immediately. If you dare to board this vessel, you will be taken into custody and restrained as illegal intruders under Japanese law." The Sea Shepherd crew hurled smoke bombs onto the Kaiko Maru's deck, which soon was covered by an orange cloud. Prop-foulers were again deployed, and one became tangled in the Kaiko Maru's propeller. Sea Shepherd's helicopter, equipped with a film crew, made low-flying passes. When the Farley arrived, Watson radioed the Hunter and said, "Let's see if we can keep them bottled up." He maneuvered the Farley to the other side of the whaler. The Kaiko Maru's captain, in an attempt to free his ship, scraped the Hunter, issued a distress call, and complained that his propeller was vibrating in an unusual way. Then, having exhausted all other options, he began to take orders from Watson's crew, which had confined his ship to a tight circle. Watson offered to send a diver into the water to examine the damaged propeller. "Don't need your diver," an officer on the Kaiko Maru insisted. "O.K.? Understand?"



For a few hours, the ships remained where they were. Watson had arrested a whaling vessel on the high seas, but he was constrained by the fact that he had no real authority to do so. Using a satellite phone, he called officials in New Zealand and Australia—both countries claim sovereignty over parts of the Southern Ocean and are staunchly against whaling—and requested that a naval vessel take the Japanese ship into custody. Both countries refused. Australia's environment minister, Malcolm Turnbull, publicly denounced the tactics that the Sea Shepherd crew had used. "Threatening to put lives at risk, or vessels at risk, is completely unacceptable," he said. "They must act safely and peacefully. They are not advancing the anti-whaling cause they espouse by threatening lives in this way." Officials from New Zealand's maritime search-and-rescue agency responded to the Kaiko Maru's distress call and spoke to Watson. "These guys are involved in illegal operations down here," Watson told the officials. They ordered him to give the Kaiko Maru free passage, and he reluctantly complied.

Since Watson did not have authority, he made use of what he did have: publicity. Earlier in the day, as the Farley chased the Kaiko Maru, he had conducted interviews with reporters in Australia and New Zealand by satellite phone, in an attempt to get them to write about Japanese whaling. (Complaining about the press to crew members on the bridge, Watson said, "It's all human drama. That's all anybody's interested in, human drama. Nobody is questioning the whales that are dying out here." Then he muttered, "Hominids, man, goddam hominids.") Watson told the reporters that if Australia and New Zealand didn't take action against the Japanese whaling program he would hunt down the Nisshin Maru and give it a "steel enema" by jamming his ship into its slipway. This was unlikely—the Nisshin Maru was hundreds of miles away—but the threat had an effect. For several days, members of the political opposition in Australia made use of the incident to criticize the government. A Labor Party minister implied that his party, if elected, would order the Australian Navy into the Southern Ocean to monitor "illegal" whaling. From New Zealand, Chris Carter, the conservation minister, phoned Watson to dissuade him from carrying out Operation Asshole and, shortly afterward, announced, "I have made it clear to Mr. Watson that New Zealand is vigorously opposed to whaling and will continue its efforts on the international stage." Watson responded by telling the *New Zealand Herald* that he was standing down. "We're not going to ram the Nisshin Maru, but we will obstruct any whaling activities that we come across," he said. "I will not watch a whale die. I've not seen a whale die since I left Greenpeace, in 1977. When we show up, whales don't die."

SEASHEPHERD.ORG

The Robert Hunter (left) and the Farley Mowat (foreground) confine the Kaiko Maru to a tight circle.

SIMEON HOUTMAN/COURTESY SEA SHEPHERD CONSERVATION SOCIETY

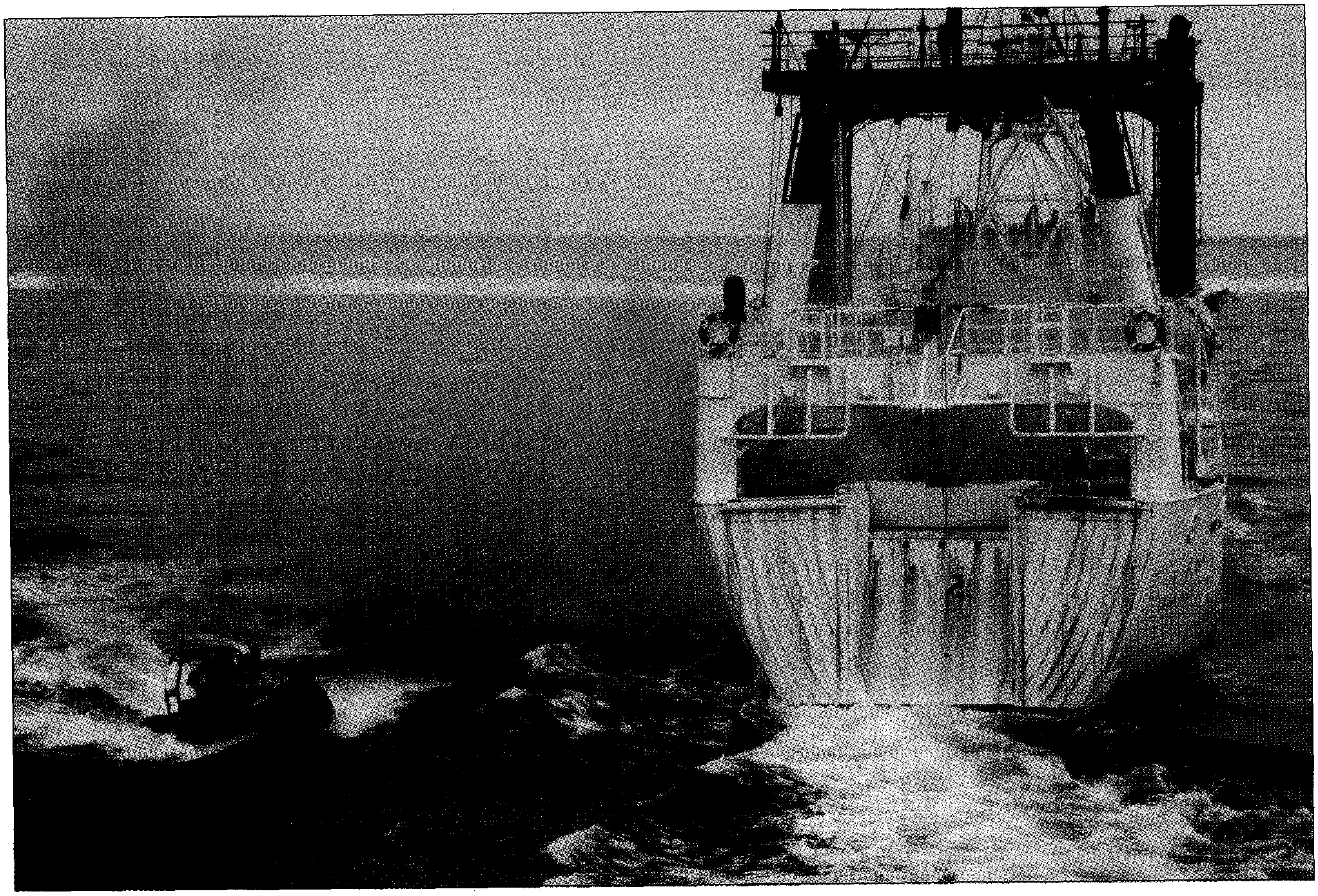
The day Watson returned his ships to Australia, on February 19th, the Hunter, like the Farley, lost its flag. It had been registered in the United Kingdom until, presumably, the Japanese saw fit to educate the British, too. In any case, the authorities in Melbourne chose to overlook Sea Shepherd's lack of valid paperwork. (Both ships were soon registered in Holland.) Watson left the Hunter in Australia, where it was to undergo preparations for his next Antarctic campaign, in December. The Farley, he decided, would cross the Pacific. It would stop in the Galápagos, where Sea Shepherd has an office that helps Ecuador's police fight marine poaching, and then continue to the Grand Banks, off the coast of Newfoundland, where the crew would dump into the ocean twenty tons of steel I-beams welded together to form large spikes. Watson called the spikes "net rippers," because they would be designed to destroy bottom-trawling nets. He planned to scatter them across the Grand Banks seabed, and announce that they were there but not say where. The tactic—much like tree spiking, a nineteenth-century method of sabotaging logging equipment, which Watson helped revive in the eighties—would mix propaganda with action, so that fishermen would have to assume the worst. Watson has a habit of blending fact with rhetoric in this way. "You will not ever perceive the truth that is reality," he once wrote. "There are many realities."

Watson spends nearly as much time writing as he does planning for campaigns at sea. He has written several books and, on a Panasonic Toughbook computer that rarely leaves his side, produces a constant stream of poems, essays, and blog postings. Much of his writing is autobiographical, and he seems unable to discuss his personal history without giving it mythic contours. In the opening pages of "Earthforce!," a strategy manual for radical environmentalists that he self-published in 1993, he wrote, "I was born on December 2, 1950, in the hereditary lands of the Huron on the north shore of

Lake Ontario," which was his way of saying that he was born in Toronto. He went on, "I was raised in the east, in the lands of the Alquonquin Micmac on the shores of the Passamaquoddy Bay"—in other words, in the Canadian province of New Brunswick. Watson's descriptions of himself at the age of nine mirror his presentation of himself today: as a fearless and uncompromising defender of animals. In "Seal Wars," a memoir that he published in 2002, he writes that when he was a young boy his best friend was a wild beaver (which he named Bucky); that he spent much of his time alone in the woods or near a wharf destroying animal traps (after Bucky was killed by one); that he was horrified by a seal hunt, which an uncle took him to see; that he once used his BB gun to shoot a boy who was about to kill a bird; and that he was bullied by other children ("Lost some battles, won most"). By his account, he was an eco-warrior before puberty.

Watson has six younger brothers and sisters. His parents, Anthony Watson (known as Tony), a French-Canadian who grew up in New Brunswick, and Anamarie Larsen, who was from Toronto, endured a difficult marriage. As a child, Watson looked up to his maternal grandfather, Otto Larsen, a painter and bare-knuckled boxer who was a veteran of the Spanish-American War and the Boer War and later became a war resister. (Larsen, a native of Copenhagen, was expelled from Denmark as a teenager after refusing to kneel before the Queen.) Watson lived with Larsen while his father fought in Korea, and when he returned, in the mid-fifties, the family moved to a fishing town on the Atlantic called St. Andrews by-the-Sea. "It is the Atlantic Ocean I remember most vividly from those years, more than I remember my own parents," Watson later wrote. "Looking across the water, I was always curious about what lay beyond." In 1959, the family moved to a village twenty miles inland called Milltown, on the Maine border. Fights between Watson's parents grew intense. In moments of rage, Watson told me, his father was abusive toward him. "When your method of parenting is to beat the hell out of you—I just don't get that," he said. He developed a habit of running away, though never very far, or for very long. In 1962, Tony Watson left for Toronto. "My father just disappeared," Watson told me. "I didn't see him for two years. He was gone."

During his absence, Watson's mother quietly began to see another man, and in 1963 she became pregnant. In January, 1964, she was hospitalized as a result of medical complications, and relatives watched over the family. Then Tony Watson suddenly returned. He gathered his children in the living room and told them that their mother had died. (The baby was stillborn.) Watson, who was thirteen years old, jumped up, looked at his father, and yelled, "No, you're lying. It's all your fault." After the funeral, Watson's father moved the family to Toronto. Watson tried several times to run away, and lived briefly in a Catholic boarding home for wayward children. His arguments with his father became explosive. "I was sixteen, and my father hit me," Watson told me. "Suddenly, I said to myself, 'I'm bigger



A Sea Shepherd Zodiac approaches the Kaiko Maru after smoke bombs have been thrown onto its deck.

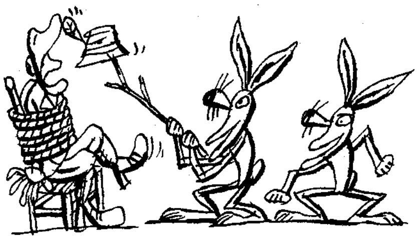
JONATHAN VASIC/COURTESY SEA SHEPHERD CONSERVATION SOCIETY

than this guy.' I just turned around and slugged him, and actually that was a very therapeutic moment for me, because I took all the animosity I had out on him." He fled to Montreal and found work at Expo 67, as a tour guide. Afterward, he hopped a freight train to Vancouver. "I wanted to get as far away as possible," he told me.

Vancouver in the sixties was a haven for political radicals, draft dodgers, artists, and drifters. "I landed there and I didn't really know where to go," Watson said. He made his way to the University of British Columbia, which was built on a large promontory ringed with wilderness and beaches. Watson climbed down to Wreck Beach, where there were two abandoned gun towers, built during the Second World War to protect Canada from a Pacific invasion. He had brought a sleeping bag with him, and he made his home in one of the towers. In the evenings, to keep warm, he built a fire with driftwood. Sometimes he looked for shelter in town. "At the time, you could go to any police station and say, 'Can I spend the night in the jail?'" he said. "The police would usually throw in a breakfast." He found odd jobs, worked on getting his high-school diploma, and, when he had enough money for rent, stayed in boarding houses. "He was in Vancouver penniless," a friend remembered. "Once, he sat on the steps of the Vancouver General Hospital and swallowed a bottle of aspirin, thinking they must take him in. It looked lovely and warm inside. So he went into the hospital, and they sent him out to the Health Sciences Centre on the U.B.C. campus. He stayed there for a while. They had to get the police to kick him out."

Watson took courses in archeology, linguistics, and communications at Simon Fraser University, known among students at the time as Berkeley North. (He never finished a degree.) In 1968, in need of work, he skipped a semester to join the Coast Guard, and for several weeks he served aboard a weather ship. He enjoyed the experience enough to enlist, in 1969, on a Norwegian cargo vessel for eight or nine months. Periodically, during the next five years, he left Vancouver for stints in the merchant marine. While at sea, Watson travelled to Southeast Asia, where he watched, from a distance, the bombing of Vietnam; to the South China Sea, where he suffered horrendous weather ("I read Conrad's 'Typhoon' during a typhoon"); to Iran, where he says he was detained and interrogated by the Shah's security agents after photographing a military installation ("I was tortured some, nothing too heavy, simply bamboo slivers under the fingernails and a few strokes with a lash"); and to Mozambique ("When I was finally able to see my surroundings, I panicked. I was on a bed in a hut"). Watson possessed what George Orwell once called a "lonely child's habit of making up stories"; through embellishment, he used his adventures to construct an indomitable persona. He loved to impersonate John Wayne. At protests, he was among the angriest radicals. In 1971, several hundred activists built a tent camp in Vancouver's Stanley Park, taking over a portion of it to protest the building of a hotel. The land was already fenced off for construction, and Rod Marining, one of the organizers of the demonstration, recalled, "Paul showed up and he took a crowbar and he began ripping the fence down, and as soon as he did this—the police were right behind him—they arrested him."

At the time, the nexus of countercultural life in Vancouver was a weekly called the *Georgia Straight*, and Watson soon began writing for it. "He virtually lived in the office for a while," Dan McLeod, the paper's longtime editor and publisher, told me. Watson's earliest articles were brief, irate, and punctuation-deprived. In a piece about a rowing club, he wrote with disgust about "the industrious upper class boys straining at their oars as if Caesar himself was watching." About the protest in Stanley Park, Watson wrote, "The cops present were full of contradictions as usual, and couldn't get it through their thick stubborn skulls that the land that they were on was not under their jurisdiction, that it was free land, Indian land, and only subject to natural and tribal law. The pigs expect us to obey their strange laws without question."



In the early seventies, Watson, along with some two dozen other environmental activists, created Greenpeace. In 1975, alarmed by the declining number of whales, the group decided to confront a Soviet whaling fleet off the coast of California. Their plan was to use Zodiacs to put themselves between the harpooners and the whales. When Greenpeace caught up with the fleet, Watson jumped into a Zodiac with Fred Easton, a cameraman. The two men witnessed a Soviet harpooner firing into a pod of whales. At one point, an injured sperm whale charged toward them. "It scared the hell out of us in the beginning," Easton said. "I just remember Paul saying, 'Here he comes!,' and we sat there. I couldn't get my camera going, and we both sat at the edge of the Zodiac, on the other side of which the whale was approaching. He swam right past us, and I swear to God he couldn't have been any more than ten feet away, and he was a huge male sperm whale, and he had an eye about the size of a dinner plate, and he did look at us with some sort of compassion, in the sense that he was certainly capable of doing harm to us in the circumstances, and had he been human we might have expected him to." The two men, watching the whale swim away, were overcome with emotion. "In an instant, my life was transformed and a purpose for my life was reverently established," Watson later wrote. He has retold the story countless times. During his recent trip to Antarctica, he composed a sixteen-hundred-line poem titled "Planet of Whales," which he later read to me in one sitting. It took fifty minutes. The poem's opening segment includes the following lines: "Leviathan's solitary eye haunts me still./I am obsessed and driven mad with anger."

Fred Easton's footage generated considerable publicity and prompted an outpouring of donations to Greenpeace. Watson desperately wanted to undertake a campaign to save seals, thousands of which are slaughtered as pups every year in northeastern Canada. Some members objected, arguing that the group should focus on whales. Nevertheless, in 1976 and 1977, Watson brought teams of Greenpeace protesters to the ice fields of Newfoundland, where the seals were hunted. During the second trip, Watson spotted a sealer working near a pile of pelts, and became furious. He threw the pelts in the water and then tossed the sealer's club in, too. A Greenpeace volunteer had never before acted so aggressively. When the campaign was over, the foundation's twelve-member board met to discuss Watson's behavior.

"It was a crisis point for the organization," Paul Spong, a whale researcher who was on the board, told me. "It was a point at which Greenpeace was trying to clarify itself and its objectives." Many board members believed that Watson's actions violated the group's pacifist ethos. Robert Hunter, a journalist and the group's most influential member (as well as the namesake of Sea Shepherd's ship), argued that Watson should be expelled. Hunter, who nevertheless remained a supporter of Watson's work until his death, two years ago, explained his decision in a history he wrote of Greenpeace, "Warriors of the Rainbow." Referring to Watson, he wrote, "No one doubted his courage for a moment. He was a great warrior-brother. Yet in terms of the Greenpeace gestalt, he seemed possessed by *too* powerful a drive, too unrelenting a desire to push himself front and center, shouldering everyone else aside." Watson had broken the law and jeopardized Greenpeace's ability to raise money. "People had their different relationships with Watson," Rex Weyler, a board member at the time, told me. "He could be inspiring, but he was not an easy person to get along with. If it wasn't the club, it would be the next thing, and the next thing, and the next thing." The vote to remove Watson was eleven to one. (Watson dissented.) "No one felt good about it," Hunter wrote. "We all felt we'd gotten trapped in a web no one wanted to see develop, yet now that it had, there was nothing to do but bring down the ax, even if it meant bringing it down on the neck of our brother."

"Intransigent enough for you, sir?"

Soon after he was expelled from the board, Watson, with a few friends, founded his own group, Earthforce. It had little focus or momentum until, in 1978, he wrote to Cleveland Amory, the writer and animal-welfare advocate, to ask for help. Amory's organization, the Fund for Animals, paid for Watson's first ship, Sea Shepherd, which he used to ram and incapacitate a notorious pirate whaling vessel called the Sierra, off the coast of Portugal. Watson nearly lost his life in the process, and, after the campaign, he was forced to scuttle Sea Shepherd. He wrote an account of his adventure that was optioned by the producer Tony Bill and, with the money, he was able to buy another vessel. (Watson says that he has sold the film rights to his story more than twenty times, though a movie has yet to be made.) After the Sierra campaign, Watson told the Washington *Post*, "People sometimes say I have a suicide complex. Well, in fact I enjoy being alive, more than most people. But people can't believe a man will risk death to save whales. That's what they can't understand. So they think I'm crazy or that I attach no value to my life." He added, "I guess I plead guilty to being a vigilante, but I can tell you something, if there are no police then vigilantes will appear because crime will never be given a free rein." He renamed his organization after his first ship, and set out to protect the oceans as he saw fit.

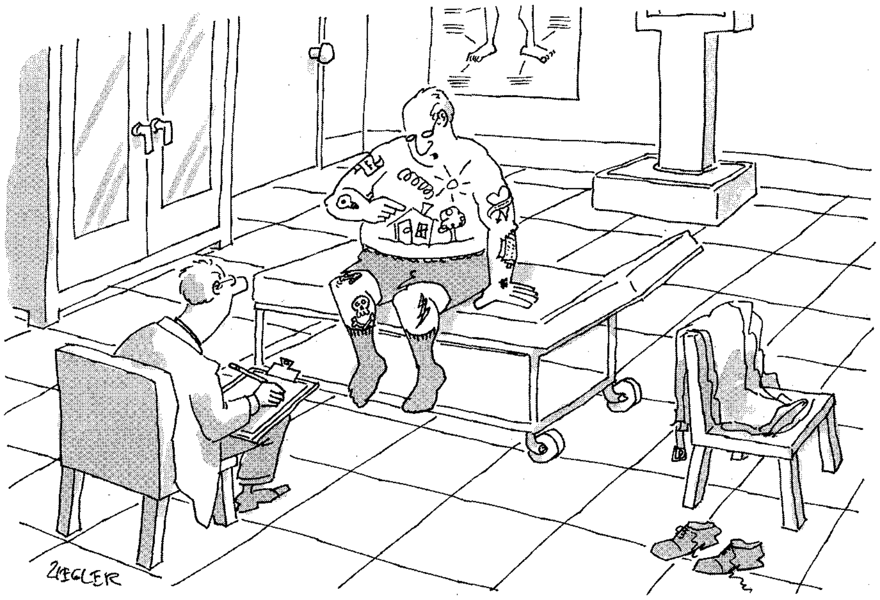
A list of Watson's campaigns in the eighties reads like a catalogue of Tintin adventures. In 1981, he secretly entered Siberia to document a Soviet food-processing facility that was converting illegally harvested whale meat into feed for animals at a fur farm. He succeeded in avoiding the K.G.B. and in outmaneuvering the Soviet Navy around a pod of gray whales. (Greenpeace, which visited the facility the following year, got caught; one of the Greenpeace activists told me, "I was taken into a room with a K.G.B. guy who asked, 'Do you know Paul Watson?'") In 1982, from a chartered airplane, Watson dropped paint-filled light bulbs on a Soviet trawler in the northern Pacific. He has used spoiled pie filling, fired from water cannons, as a weapon at sea. During the Falklands War, he contacted the British Navy and offered to assist its fleet by ferrying medical supplies to the front—"so I could head off any Argentine move to kill penguins," he told me. The British declined the offer. In 1983, he brought the Canadian seal hunt to a near-standstill by blockading the port of St. John's, Newfoundland, and announcing that he would ram any sealing vessel that left the wharf; when the authorities threatened to board his ship, he replied that he would sink it at the mouth of the harbor, thereby creating an impassable reef. Watson eventually left the harbor, under cover of fog, and he was later arrested on an ice field where the hunt was taking place. (Since 1977, it has been a crime in Canada to observe the seal hunt without a permit.) His ship was confiscated, he was charged with conspiring to commit mischief and extortion, among other crimes, and he spent several days in jail. He was released after Mike Farrell, the actor who played Captain B. J. Hunnicut on "M*A*S*H," posted his bail. Watson was acquitted on appeal, and his ship was returned to him.

Watson is a keen tactician. "He generally baffles the police so badly they walk away at times when I would be in handcuffs," Peter Brown, a filmmaker who has been a Sea Shepherd crew member for more than twenty-five years, told me. Watson conducts most of his campaigns in international waters, where the law is vague and enforcement is weak. He nearly always publicizes Sea Shepherd's activities, which helps convey the impression that what he is attempting to do is perfectly legal. One of his preferred tactics is what he calls the Brer Rabbit Ploy: "If you have a political or moral advantage, then let the authorities know and believe that you want to be put on trial." On several occasions, he has demanded to be charged for sinking or ramming vessels, and he has even flown to a country that is considering his arrest. Watson says the ploy works because his adversaries fear that he will use the courts to publicize their own wrongdoing. But he has also claimed responsibility for damage to ships that in fact was caused by accidents or by other activists. "Let me just give you a warning about Paul," an anti-whaling conservationist told me. "He takes credit for more than he's due." (By Watson's count, Sea Shepherd has sunk ten whaling vessels in port. By my count, he and his crew have attempted to scuttle two vessels and have successfully sunk two others.) Still, he is adept at using the judicial system to his advantage. After the incident involving the paint-filled light bulbs, he was charged with four violations of Canada's Aeronautics Act. But, because the Soviet crew could not be subpoenaed, Watson was the government's only witness. According to the Toronto *Globe and Mail*, at a pre-trial hearing the judge shook his head in disbelief as he asked the prosecutor, "You have no witnesses other than the accused?" The prosecutor conceded: "That is correct, Your Honor. The location of the incident comes from Watson." The case was eventually dismissed.

In the early nineties, instead of simply claiming the side of morality, as he did after ramming the Sierra, Watson began to assert legal authority for his actions. For this, he cited primarily the U.N. World Charter for Nature, a resolution passed by the General Assembly in 1982, which allows for private citizens to help "safeguard and conserve nature in areas beyond national jurisdiction." But it is not a license for vigilantism. The charter is nonbinding, and does not have enforcement provisions. It indicates that individuals should act only "to the extent they are able," a clause that Watson interprets to mean physical capability but which is obviously meant to encompass legal authority as well. No country regards ramming, disabling, or scuttling ships to be legal activities, and, except on rare occasions, even naval ships cannot lawfully interfere with foreign vessels on the high seas. When I described Watson's use of the charter to David Caron, the co-director of the Law of the Sea Institute, at the University of California at Berkeley, he said, "Clearly wrong. There is no ambiguity."

In June, Watson was interviewed on a CBC radio talk show. The host, Susan Bell, asked him about his aggressive tactics, and he explained, "We intervene against illegal activities, and we are simply upholding international conservation law, and the United Nations World Charter for Nature allows for us to do that. It says that any nongovernmental organization, or individual, is empowered to uphold international conservation law. That's why I've sunk ten whaling ships and destroyed tens of millions of dollars' worth of illegal fishing gear, and I'm not in jail." Watson spoke in a calm, authoritative voice, and Bell changed the subject. It was a brilliant evasion. But, the more I heard him invoke the charter, the more I began to suspect that he actually believed that it authorized him to police the sea; some of the people who know him best admitted that they, too, could never be certain when he was tactically stretching the truth and when he was deceiving himself. In "Earthforce!," Watson advises readers to make up facts and figures when they need to, and to deliver them to reporters confidently, "as Ronald Reagan did." Watson possesses Reagan's intuitive grasp of the media, and, like Reagan, at times he seems astray in the labyrinth of his own illusions.

Several years after ramming the Sierra, Watson gave himself the title of captain, though he does not have a captain's license. "He loves to dress up in uniform, as 'Captain Paul Watson,' and suddenly there's enough gold braid on his shoulders to skipper the Queen Mary," David Sellers, an old friend and former Sea Shepherd crew member, told me. In the eighties, Sellers and Watson fought so bitterly over the seaworthiness



"I was just a kid when I got this one."

INSULT

Before you went out I asked you
in no uncertain terms to button
the next button up your shirt
that showed your naked breast
from the right angle when you twisted
and bent, an angle admittedly rarely
reproduced in real-world space
and then what would need to be in place
is the mythical irresistible male
whose lust could flare furiously
(like mine) and push you ecstatically
beyond where you sexually go
with me. Obviously I don't know
what would be possible for you
with another body than mine,
but I love you and yours so dearly
the thought's too much for me
despite your saying your love for me
makes the idea preposterous
from the get-go. I'm sorry
I spoke harshly. My jealousy
is a jealous companion.
It wants me alone.

—*Michael Ryan*

of Watson's ship that they did not speak for fifteen years. (Sellers, a licensed captain, had insisted that it was not safe for ocean travel.) Many of Watson's colleagues from the seventies and eighties no longer work with him; they have grown tired either of the campaigns or of Watson's style of leadership—"anarchy run by God," a longtime volunteer called it. "He doesn't like people who disagree with him."

Watson has been married three times and is currently divorcing his third wife, Allison Lance, whom he met at an animal-rights conference in 1997. His second wife, Lisa DiStefano, was a *Playboy* model. (DiStefano was a Sea Shepherd volunteer, and Lance still is.) His first wife, Starlet Lum, was a Greenpeace bookkeeper. With Lum, Watson had a daughter, Lani. Now twenty-seven, she is a video-game producer living in Seattle. When Watson is not travelling or at sea, he lives in Friday Harbor, Washington, on the grounds of a former Buddhist retreat, which also serves as Sea Shepherd's headquarters. He is close to his daughter now, but for several years he was not. He wrote in one of his memoirs, "I had never felt that a person's vision should be forsaken because of parenthood. In fact, to follow one's bliss is in my opinion the single most important example a father or a mother can set for their child. I would never abandon my dreams for domestic enslavement."

Watson believes that humanity's impulse to organize its surroundings, no matter how benign-seeming or elevating, is inherently destructive. This impulse—dating as far back as the first hoe—has been considered beneficial, Watson argues, because people have assumed that altering the shape of nature does not have real consequences, or because they have measured those consequences only in relation to how they affect humanity, or because they believe that they have a God-given right to do what they wish with plants and animals. Watson considers religion to be the invention of an arrogant species that has spent too much of its existence attempting to remove itself from the animal kingdom. This is why he prefers to call people hominids. "The Hebrew word for man was *adamah*—so there's where you get your Adam—and *adamah* means 'soil,'" he told me. "Cain was a farmer, and farmers began to kill off hunter-gatherers. Our ancestors fed from the table of life; in other words, they fed from nature, but we alienated ourselves from nature by depending upon agriculture, which is what I consider to be the forbidden fruit."

In the seventies, Watson became interested in the writings of Henry Beston, an early-twentieth-century naturalist, who wrote, "The animal shall not be measured by man. In a world older and more complete than ours they move finished and complete, gifted with extensions of the senses we have lost or never attained." Watson found similar ideas in the work of Henry Fairfield Osborn and William T. Hornaday, and in the Deep Ecology movement, associated with Arne Naess, a Norwegian philosopher and mountaineer, who, in the early seventies, noticed that some environmentalists had begun arguing that no species was of greater worth than another, and that ecosystems should be protected for their own sake, not simply to benefit mankind. A "deep" ecologist would clean up a pond because plants and animals deserve to be free of pollution; a "shallow" ecologist would preserve the pond so that his grandchildren could have a nice place to swim.

Naess believed that the two outlooks could coexist, but Watson argues that they are in profound conflict. He contends that there are only two social currents that really matter, anthropocentrism and biocentrism, and they function in his thinking much like a Marxist dialectic: the former being a dominant and amoral world view that, fixated on the interests of one species, is inherently unstable, violent, and destined to collapse; the latter being a view that is held by a vanguard, egalitarian and just, and that, representing every species' interests, is destined to triumph. There is a strain of misanthropy in this way of thinking, and Watson attracted the attention of the Drudge Report and a number of right-leaning Web sites recently, after he called for drastic but unspecified measures to reduce the world's human population to under a billion. "He likes people to be shook up," Starlet Lum, his first wife, told me. "Maybe it's a bit of the unrest that's in him." Watson has said that "cancer is a cure to nature's problems," that earthworms are more ecologically important than people, and that humanity resembles a virus on the verge of killing its host, the planet.

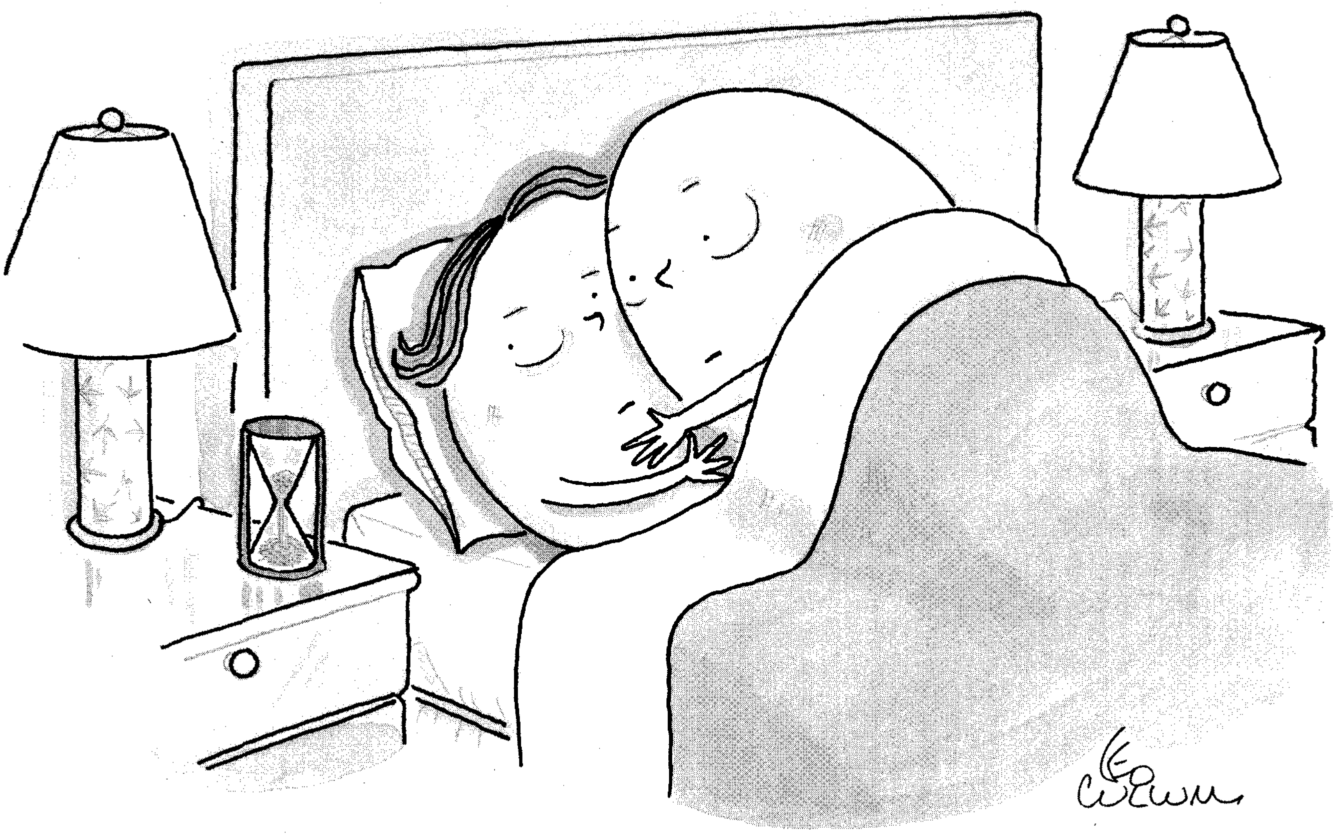
"People say, 'You're incredibly arrogant,'" Watson told me. "I say, when you're dealing with a species that's as arrogant as the human race you've got to be arrogant to believe that you can actually change it." He regards civilization's greatest artistic and cultural achievements—from architecture to music and film—as expressions of human vanity, "worthless to the earth." He sometimes asks people to imagine the outrage that would occur if someone were to destroy, say, the Vatican or the "Mona Lisa," and he compares that with the indifference that people exhibit toward the mass extinction of plants and animals. "In anthropocentric society, a harsh judgment is given to those that destroy or seek to destroy the creations of humanity," he has written. "Monkeywrench a bulldozer and they will call you a vandal. Spike a tree and they will call you a terrorist. Liberate a coyote from a trap and they will call you a thief. Yet if a human destroys the wonders of creation, the beauty of the natural world, then anthropocentric society calls such people loggers, miners, developers, engineers, and businessmen."

In lectures, Watson often avoids this dialectic, and talks mainly about the dying oceans. For many conservationists, the near-extinction of numerous whale populations in the seventies, and their continued threatened status today, is emblematic of a much more severe problem: the wholesale harvesting, whether for human consumption or for industry, of too many living things from the sea. Life in the oceans is being eliminated so rapidly that science can barely measure how much of it is gone. Sea Shepherd exists because Watson is arrogant enough to make sure that it is there, but also, perhaps, because our collective faith in the sea's resiliency runs so deep and has become so dangerously comforting that a certain amount of rage and fantasy is demanded to shake it.

Changes to the ocean have never been easy to document. In the seventies, Jacques Cousteau speculated—without much hard evidence—that roughly a third of all life in the oceans had vanished. In 1984, Farley Mowat, the Canadian naturalist and writer, for whom Watson named his flagship, published "Sea of Slaughter," a thoroughly researched but primarily anecdotal book that gave substance to Cousteau's claim. "We are now facing the possibility that the seas may become virtual life-deserts in the not-far-distant future," Mowat wrote. Sifting through ship records, some dating as far back as the sixteenth century, he found evidence of startling abundance among whales, seabirds, and fish. ("Cods are so thick by the shore that we hardly have been able to row a boat through them," a skipper observed in the early sixteen-hundreds.) The records presented a sharp contrast with what Mowat saw in the North Atlantic: the collapse of the cod, haddock, and halibut fisheries, and the virtual extirpation of the right whale—all driven by what he called a "spiral of exploitation." ("As the fish became scarcer, so their value rose," he explained. "They were hunted harder, and became scarcer, and their value rose.") It took Mowat five years to complete the book, and by the end he was despondent. He told me, "I was so depressed that I contemplated blowing myself up. Well, not exactly, but that gives you the idea."

It was not until the mid-nineties that fisheries scientists turned their attention to the spiral of exploitation and attempted to gauge its consequences. They discovered that their discipline had been measuring biodiversity with a very narrow lens: looking, for instance, at habitats only in a particular region of the ocean, or at the rise or decline of a particular species, and usually with respect to benchmarks that had been set just decades earlier. No one had tried to determine what the full spectrum of life in the ocean looked like a hundred years or five hundred years in the past. "We forgot the wonder and splendor of a virgin nature," Watson wrote recently. "We revise history and make it fit into our present perceptions." In 1995, the process of forgetting was given a name—"shifting baseline syndrome"—by Daniel Pauly, a scientist at the University of British Columbia. "Essentially, this syndrome has arisen because each generation of fisheries scientists accepts as a baseline the stock size and species composition that occurred at the beginning of their careers, and uses this to evaluate changes," Pauly argued in the journal *Trends in Ecology and Evolution*. He concluded, "The result obviously is a gradual shift of the baseline, a gradual accommodation of the creeping disappearance of resource species." When Pauly and others took a longer view, they noticed another worrying trend. Humanity had been eating its way down the ocean's food web; as large marine predators became scarce, people developed a taste for smaller and smaller fish. Animals that were once used for bait or that were considered worthless (hagfish, sea cucumber) were later taken in large quantities for human consumption. "Bait thirty years ago was calamari," Pauly told me. "Now it is served in a restaurant. It is very nice. But it was bait before." Future generations, Pauly predicts, only half in jest, will grow up on jellyfish sandwiches.

Technology both furthers the depletion and helps mask it. The tools of industrial fishing (drift nets, bottom trawls, and longlines) compensate for the diminishment of marine life that they cause by taking what little is left all the more intensively. Drift nets—free-floating veils of monofilament webbing that can be as long as twenty-five miles—were essentially banned on the high seas by the United Nations in 1992; at the peak of their use, in the eighties, there was enough drift netting in the ocean on any given day to encircle the planet, if measured end to end. Bottom trawling, which involves raking the ocean floor for food on a huge scale, leaves behind wastelands where there had been complex ecosystems. Like the other forms of industrial fishing, longlines, some of which submerge thousands of hooks in the water, yield immense quantities of bycatch, or unwanted fish, most of which is severely injured or dead. Every year in the United States alone, more than a million tons of bycatch is discarded; in relative terms, this amounts to



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more than twenty per cent of all the fish hauled out of American waters. Some fisheries are more wasteful than others. Among the most notorious is the shrimp harvest in the Gulf of Mexico. Conducted by bottom trawling, it results in more than eighty per cent bycatch, and countless plants and corals have been uprooted and dumped overboard. There is no terrestrial equivalent of this type of harvest. Pauly says that it would be like bulldozing whole forests to hunt deer.

Watson refers to our collective misuse of the sea as a tragedy of the commons. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization has declared that sixty-nine per cent of the world's major fisheries are either "fully exploited" or "overexploited." Among the most pessimistic studies, one published in *Nature* in 2003 estimated that the combined population of large predatory fish—including tuna, marlin, and swordfish—has dropped to a tenth of what it was before the advent of industrial fishing. A more revealing statistic, perhaps, is the number of scientists who have spoken out about the problem. Earlier this year, more than a hundred signed a letter to the World Trade Organization, urging it to scale back subsidies to the fishing sector. "There are only decades left before the damage we have inflicted on the oceans becomes permanent," the scientists wrote. Watson began ramming drift netters in 1987, before the U.N. ban. In 1993, he pulled his ship alongside a Cuban bottom trawler on the Grand Banks and attacked it with butyric acid. For the past seven years, he has combatted illegal fishing in the Galápagos Islands, one of the ocean's richest and most unspoiled marine habitats. Watson often says, "If we can't save Galápagos, we won't be able to save anything."

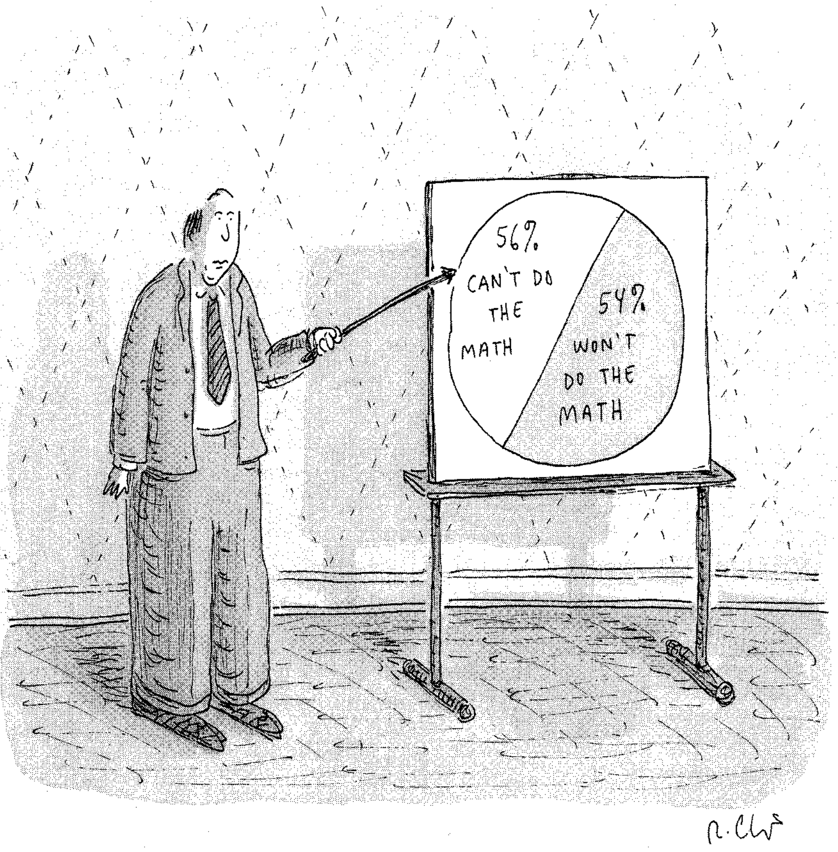
In June, after crossing the Pacific from Australia, the Farley arrived in Puerto Ayora, on Santa Cruz, the most populous island in the Galápagos. In a harbor filled with small pleasure boats, it seemed out of place. According to Watson, although the Farley was designed as a North Sea trawler, it was never used for fishing and during the Cold War it was a NATO spy vessel. Some furniture and equipment had been returned to the ship since the Antarctic expedition, but not much. Among the few remaining decorations were paintings of sea animals, including one of Mocha Dick, the whale that apparently inspired Melville's novel.

Unlike campaigns at sea, Watson's work in the Galápagos requires him to negotiate a complicated government bureaucracy. The Galápagos National Park manages the protection of wildlife in the third-largest marine protected area in the world. The Ecuadoran Navy, which monitors and controls the movement of all ships in the area, is reluctant to fight environmental crimes and, at times, has blocked other agencies from combatting them. Ecuador's Environmental Police has the authority to make arrests in the Galápagos but has no real presence on the islands. And the Galápagos National Park, which patrols the waters, and is eager to end illegal fishing there, is not permitted to use force to prevent criminal activity. In April, Ecuador's President, Rafael Correa, declared that the Galápagos was in a state of environmental crisis, and in June UNESCO announced that the islands were on the World Heritage in Danger List. As many as three hundred thousand sharks are killed annually in the reserve, where shark hunts and industrial fishing are banned.

Conservationists often complain that it is difficult to gain popular support for saving sharks—animals that tend to evoke fear rather than sympathy. In 1975, in the *Georgia Straight*, Watson wrote an angry critique of "Jaws." ("The movie has proven itself more dangerous to marine life than sharks are or ever have been to human life.") Since then, numerous species, including oceanic whitetip sharks, scalloped hammerheads, and daggernose sharks, have experienced catastrophic declines in population. Many sharks perish as bycatch, but increasingly they are being hunted for their fins, a delicacy in China and a lucrative commodity. (The annual export of fins is thought to be worth about a billion dollars.) One study, published in *Ecology Letters* last year, estimates that between twenty-six million and seventy-three million sharks are killed for their fins every year. Not long ago, Watson was nearly imprisoned in Costa Rica after confronting shark hunters in Cocos Island National Park, another UNESCO Heritage site, and seizing some of their equipment. He fled the country as the authorities were trying to apprehend him. (The events are documented in a new film, "Sharkwater.")

In 2000, Watson sailed a Sea Shepherd ship to the Galápagos for the first time, and lent (and eventually donated) a ninety-five-foot former Coast Guard vessel to the park, to help the rangers patrol. Several years later, when a ranger needed to learn how to fly light aircraft to expand the park's reach, Watson provided money for lessons. Sea Shepherd volunteers joined park rangers on their missions, to document their effectiveness. If they believed that the rangers were not aggressive enough, they protested, sometimes publicly. "It's been a rocky road," Watson told me. "Over the last seven years, we've been chased out of here three times by the Navy. Fishermen once seized the park and tried to kick us out." Still, Watson persisted. Last year, he decided to open an office in Puerto Ayora, and hired Sean O'Hearn-Gimenez, a thirty-three-year-old computer specialist, to run it.

O'Hearn-Gimenez, who was born in Puerto Rico, first went to the Galápagos in 2000 as a Sea Shepherd observer. One afternoon while we were on the Farley, he told me about a day that changed his life. He was at sea with the rangers, who had found shark poachers in the reserve; the men argued over what to do with a shark that had become tangled in a line off the poaching vessel's transom. "One of the fishermen got angry and just hooked the shark, gaffed it, and slammed it against the deck. And he goes, 'There you go, there's your shark.' And there is this live shark flapping on deck, bleeding, and they're discussing exactly what to do, and finally one of the fishermen cut the line and threw him overboard. But before he cut the line you could see that the shark was flapping around, injuring himself, because he was desperate to survive. And it was horrible. It was probably the moment where I said—" O'Hearn-Gimenez's eyes began to fill with tears. After a moment, he said, "Sorry. I didn't care. I was willing to die. I didn't give a shit, because the shark almost broke his own tail, trying." He paused again. "And then the shark stood still, gasping, and that's when they just cut the line and threw him back into the water, like he was a piece of nothing."



By May of this year, O'Hearn-Gimenez had turned the Puerto Ayora office into a private intelligence service designed to fight environmental crimes. He identified poachers who were trying to move contraband out of the country, and provided the authorities with the resources—fuel, food, lodging—that they needed to apprehend the criminals. Sea Shepherd began making the Ecuadoran papers. When O'Hearn-Gimenez learned that the mayor of the Galápagos' Isabela Island had cut down a ninety-year-old mangrove forest, he publicized the incident, and the mayor was prosecuted. (The case is pending.) In late June, O'Hearn-Gimenez provided the Environmental Police with information that led to the seizure of nearly nineteen thousand shark fins that were being smuggled to Peru, presumably for shipment to Asia. It was one of the largest shark-fin busts in Ecuador's history.

Watson was due in the Galápagos in early July, after a short trip to Quito, Ecuador's capital, to accept an award from the government for Sea Shepherd's work. In the meantime, Alex Cornelissen was captaining the Farley, and he decided to take the ship out to sea for a couple of days to patrol for illegal longlining within the reserve. He did this without notifying the park, much to the annoyance of some senior rangers. During the ship's first evening out of port, Cornelissen gathered the crew and announced, "I just want you to know that Sean was supposed to come with us, but the reason why he is in Quito is because there was another bust. With our help, the police confiscated twenty thousand sea cucumbers." The crew cheered.

The next morning during breakfast, three high-pitched alarms rang in the galley. Everyone ran to the deck or to the bridge. A deckhand in the crow's nest had spotted a fishing vessel that was dropping miles of line into the marine reserve. Behind the vessel, a speedboat, a series of empty plastic oil jugs—blue, green, yellow, black—bobbed in the water. The containers were being used as buoys for the longline, braided polypropylene cording. Cornelissen, looking through his binoculars, announced, "Speedboat five miles away." The first mate, Peter Hammarstedt, yelled from the bridge to the deckhands, "Get some grappling hooks. Get a ladder in case someone is going in the water." The plan was to pull up the line. Hammarstedt hung his head out the window to try to gauge the ship's distance from the line.

"It's just off the starboard bow," he said.

"Get it away from the propeller," Cornelissen said.

The line became taut. The crew tried to pull it in, hand over hand, but each pull seemed to edge the line closer to the propeller. Cornelissen turned to Hammarstedt and said, "Get that line out of the water, dude, now!" Hammarstedt ordered the line to be cut. The crew lifted another portion of the line on deck and, this time, brought it to an eyelet at the bow, through which it could be threaded and brought on board with minimum danger to the propellers. Miles of line were pulled through the eyelet. Because the line had not been in the water for very long, most of the hooks were either baited or empty; only a few had snared fish, nearly all of them yellowfin tuna.

As the crew hauled in the line, someone on the bridge noticed that the poachers had fled, and a plan quickly developed to pursue them in a Zodiac. Cornelissen wanted video footage of the speedboat's name and registration number. As a crane hoisted the Zodiac overboard, three crew members leaped in. One was carrying a video camera and a handheld G.P.S., which he had been instructed to frame at the bottom of his shot, to prove that the poachers were in the reserve.

The speedboat was not visible from the Zodiac, which sits very close to the water, but it could be seen from the Farley's bridge. By radio, Cornelissen provided the Zodiac with directions, and for the first mile or so the dinghy, driven by a volunteer named Adam Conniss, raced across the empty water. Conniss's face was sunburned, and his dreadlocks were blowing behind his ears. "Ahaaa, you motherfuckers!" he screamed. After a few minutes, the Farley radioed to tell him that he was going the wrong way. He adjusted the Zodiac's course, and the poachers came into view.

The Zodiac was moving faster than the speedboat, and when the poachers noticed this they began to jettison evidence of long-lining. They threw bait into the water—the trail of fish oil in their wake was visible more than a mile away—and dumped spools of polypropylene cording, which floated near the surface. The first spool became tangled in the Zodiac's propeller. Conniss stopped to cut it away, and after that he steered more carefully. Minutes later, the Zodiac pulled alongside the poachers. The speedboat contained three men, and its name, Siempre Maximo, was painted on the bow. As the two vessels raced side by side, the fishermen looked at the Zodiac with befuddlement. Clearly, the Farley did not belong to the Navy or to the park, and yet its crew was acting as if it had authority to police the area. Stranger still, perhaps, was the end to the pursuit. Once the video footage was shot, the Zodiac veered away from the Siempre Maximo and headed back toward the Farley.

The rest of the afternoon was spent pulling in lines, an arduous task. When a longline is taut, it is likely to cause blisters in the hands of the person pulling it aboard; when the line is slack, there is a danger that some part of it will drift into a propeller. Longlines are slippery in the water and, in this case, the line was coated with broken jellyfish tentacles that stung. By evening, the crew had pulled in roughly ten miles of line and about two hundred and fifty hooks. It had untangled fifteen tunas, most of them carcasses, and two rays. All the animals, alive or dead, were returned to the sea.

That night, I climbed into my bunk thinking about the fishermen we had pursued. The Siempre Maximo did not belong to a commercial fleet; its lines were handmade. And yet, even if one could confirm that the men's financial predicament was dire, it would not make the ocean seem less vulnerable. In a day's catch, assuming for the sake of argument that the Farley had interrupted the fishermen while they were in the middle of their work, and that only ten per cent of their hooks caught anything, the lines could have snared about fifty animals; in a week of solid fishing, about three hundred and fifty; in a year, nearly twenty thousand—all this, potentially, from just three poachers in a tiny boat off the coast of South America.

Watson and O'Hearn-Gimenez arrived in Puerto Ayora on July 5th. "We met with the Vice-President and the Minister of Foreign Affairs," Watson told me. The ceremony had been followed by talks with the general commander of the National Police, who wanted to discuss how Sea Shepherd could assist the police in fighting poachers. The talks concluded with a signed pledge formalizing the relationship. One clause stated that Ecuador might grant Watson's crew the authority to conduct joint patrols with the police in the reserve. "This was a surprise," O'Hearn-Gimenez said. "I'm sure this was the result of the successful operations we had. I didn't think that we were going to have meetings, and then last night the general—"

"Get this," Watson interrupted. "The general wants to go on the Antarctica campaign—"

"He came to the ceremony, and in the end he mentioned this joint coöperation," O'Hearn-Gimenez continued. The two men spoke excitedly about the meetings. "The problem is the goddam Navy," Watson said. "Everybody in Quito knows the Navy is on the take." Earlier in the year, rangers had attempted to prevent the Navy from giving illegal tours in the Galápagos; in return, members of the Navy and the Air Force had assaulted the director of the park, Raquel

Molina, and several rangers. (The Ministry of Defense is investigating the incident.) When Watson met with Molina to find out how he could further help the park, she spoke about the assault and seemed shaken. It was obvious that the more involved with the government Sea Shepherd became, the more it would have to compromise.

Watson's initial plan had been to take the Farley through the Panama Canal to the Grand Banks, to dump the net rippers, and then, possibly, to Iceland, to combat whaling there. Most of the crew had joined with the hope of going to Iceland, which now appeared to be suspending its planned whale hunt. In any case, Watson, excited about the agreement he had signed in Quito, decided to linger in Ecuador. He had also learned that an American company called Planktos was planning to send a ship into international waters about three hundred miles from the marine reserve; Planktos had announced that it would dump tons of iron dust in the ocean to spark the growth of phytoplankton, and then sell credits based on how much carbon the phytoplankton consumed. Activists and government officials in Ecuador and in the United States had expressed concern about the project's environmental impact; Watson thought that he might intervene. He spent hours at his computer, researching the project, and continued to meet with officials. The head of the Environmental Police, Colonel Teresa Carranza, came to Puerto Ayora for a tour of the Farley. At a dinner that Watson held for her, she raised her glass and announced, "Paul Watson and all of you here, what you've been doing is very contagious. I have been influenced by what you do." Then she turned to Watson and handed him a gold pin. She continued, "Now, with everything that has happened, Sea Shepherd is part of the Environmental Police, an extension of the Environmental Police, and this shield is a great honor. It is only worn by police officers." Watson smiled. The pin was a symbolic gesture, another step toward being given real authority to protect the sea, but the praise seemed to make him uncomfortable. He glanced down, pointed to O'Hearn-Gimenez, and said, "I haven't done anything. He's done it all."

In the morning, droplets of seawater and precipitation pricked faces, arms, and legs. From the Farley's deck, the panorama was one of humanity pushing into nature: ships, noise, people, and the mundane detritus of civilization—water bottles and diesel exhaust—spreading out from the shoreline. Since 1990, the population of the Galápagos has grown from under ten thousand to thirty thousand. On board the Farley, the crew was restless. Watson's volunteers had spent more than a month crossing the Pacific, determined to save whales in Iceland. For many crew members, the campaign against Planktos presented a confusing moral calculus, and it wasn't even certain that Watson would pursue the company's ship. Without a clear objective, the cycle of chores that kept the Farley running—the continuous battle against rust and decrepitude—became tedious, eroding morale each day. At least ten people planned to leave the ship. One volunteer said, "It's getting a little silly, just feeling useless." Watson told me that there were worse places to sit idle than the Galápagos. "They can all jump ship," he said.

"I have received death threats, and I'm pretty much in a safe house right now," O'Hearn-Gimenez told me from his cell phone on August 3rd. I was back in New York, and he was on the Ecuadoran mainland. He had orchestrated another huge shark-fin bust—as much as three tons, he speculated, in three hiding places. But during the seizures mobs of fishermen had gathered at two of the hideouts, and a high-ranking officer had called off the bust. O'Hearn-Gimenez told me that the contraband belonged to "one of the biggest Mafia leaders in Ecuador," whom he suspected of interfering. Whether or not corrupt officials were involved, the government's position on the shark-fin trade was changing. In late July, the President decreed that sharks accidentally caught could legally be sold—a significant loosening of the ban. On August 4th, he announced, "We are not going to allow Americans from Sea Shepherd or wherever else to come here to tell us what to do." He ordered that O'Hearn-Gimenez be deported. As O'Hearn-Gimenez was packing his bags, however, the order was rescinded.

Still, it seemed that Sea Shepherd's position in the country had grown much more tenuous. The Farley's port clearance had expired, and the Ecuadoran Navy was anxious to see the ship leave the Galápagos. As the Farley sailed from Puerto Ayora, Watson wrote me a long e-mail from the radio room, in which he declared his intention to stay and look for poachers in Ecuadoran waters. His defiance reminded me of something he had once said about Conan the Barbarian, the comic-book hero. "It's a wonderful ethic that this guy has," Watson said. "You know, he wouldn't hesitate to take your head off. But there is a code: always doing the honorable thing, even when it put him in life-threatening situations. He always honored everything that was weaker than he was. He had that mercy quality. But, at the same time, strength. And he never hesitated. He would never stop to think, Am I doing the right thing? He knew he was doing the right thing."

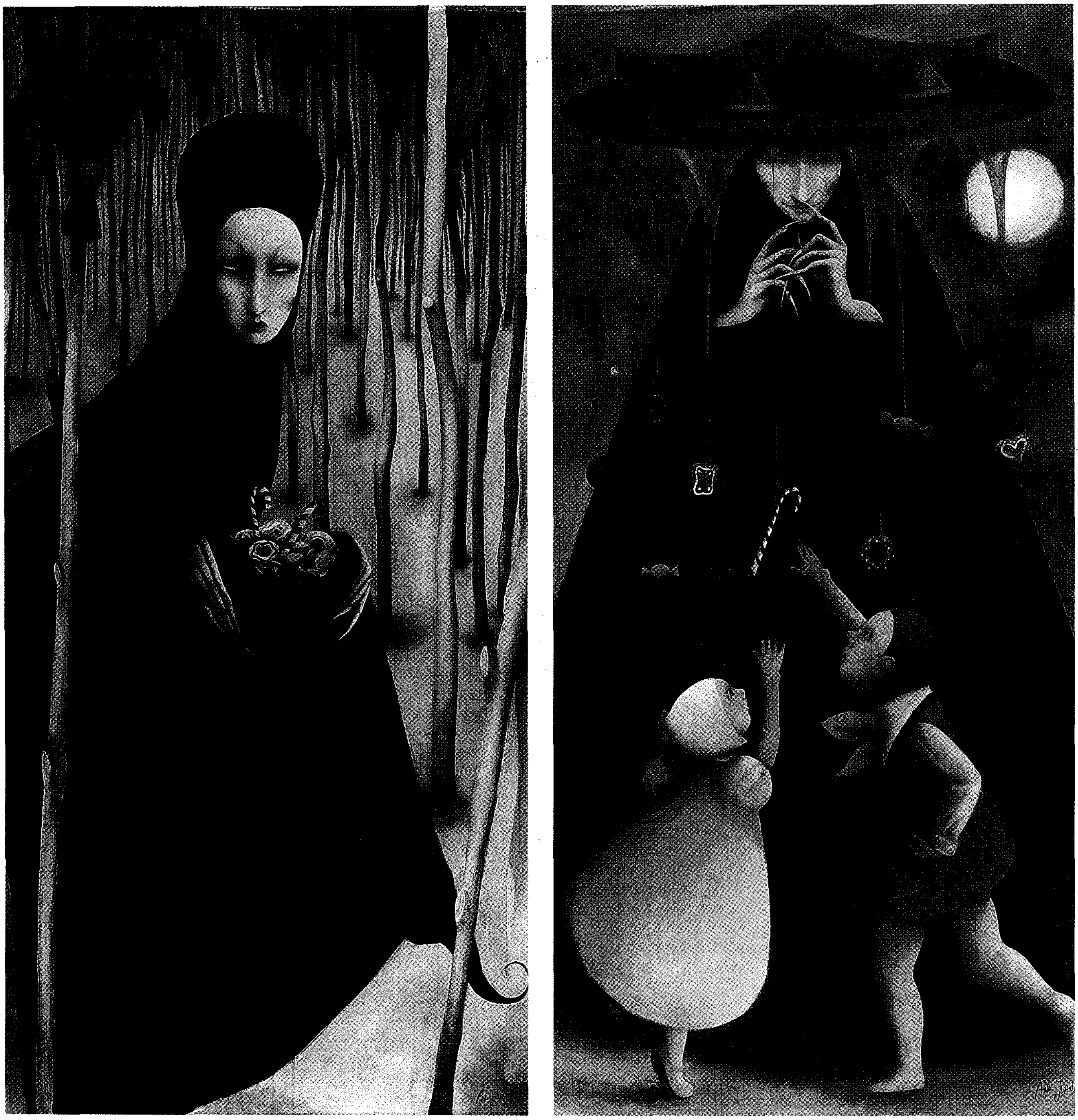
Watson was also doing, not thinking. He wrote, "We are making our way in the darkness between the islands and we should be in the area where we suspect illegal long-lining is taking place by early morning. The Navy has been hailing us on the radio but we have been ignoring them. I don't think they have any idea where we are or where we are heading. We were ordered to go due east and out of the Galápagos marine reserve. Instead we are going southwest and deep into the marine reserve." Humpback and sperm whales had surfaced near the ship; a red-throated frigate bird had perched on the foremast for most of the day. "The seas are calm," Watson wrote. "The night sky is inky black, without a star in sight and no moon. It is like cruising through deep space. In the far distance we can see the dull glow of Puerto Ayora to our stern. It's amazing cruising through these waters flying our black-and-white Jolly Roger, in defiance of the Ecuadoran Navy. Not much different than the pirates of the seventeenth century, really, challenging authority in defense of the living treasures of the Enchanted Islands." ♦

NEWYORKER.COM

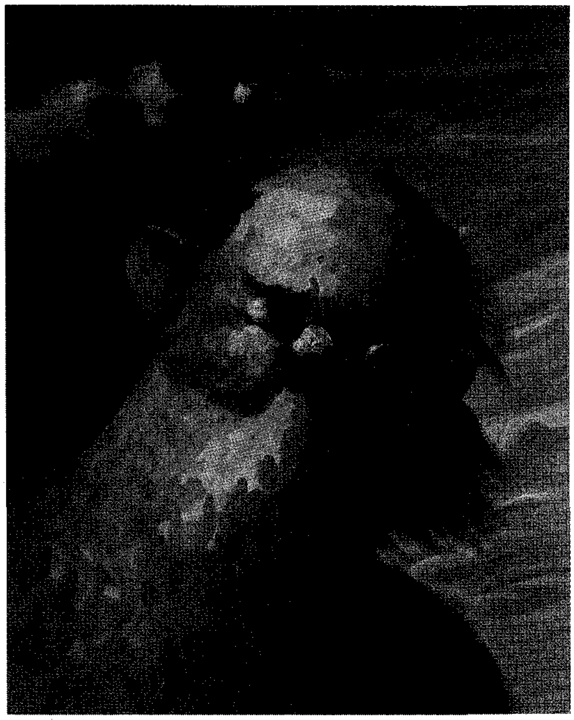
An interview with Raffi Khatchadourian, and video of Sea Shepherd in action.

PORTFOLIO

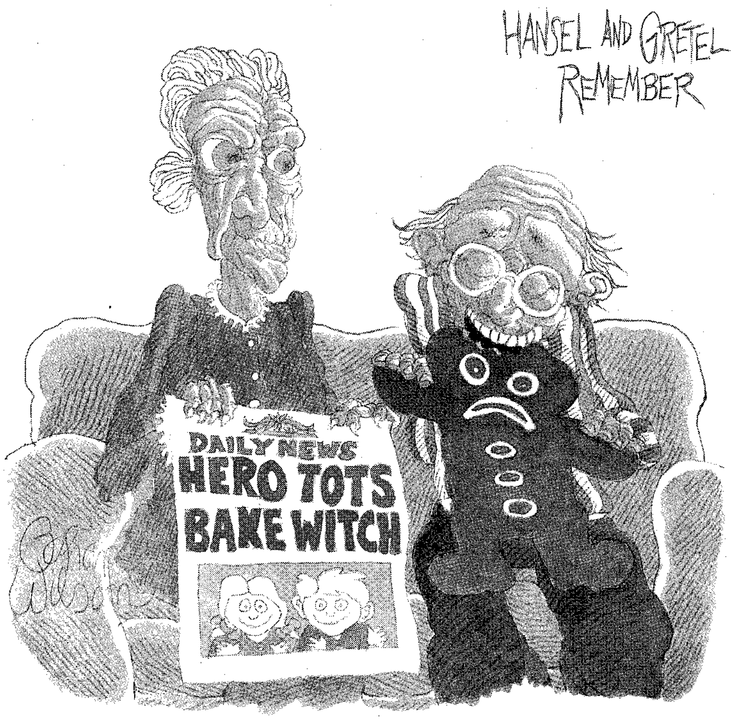
HANSEL AND GRETEL

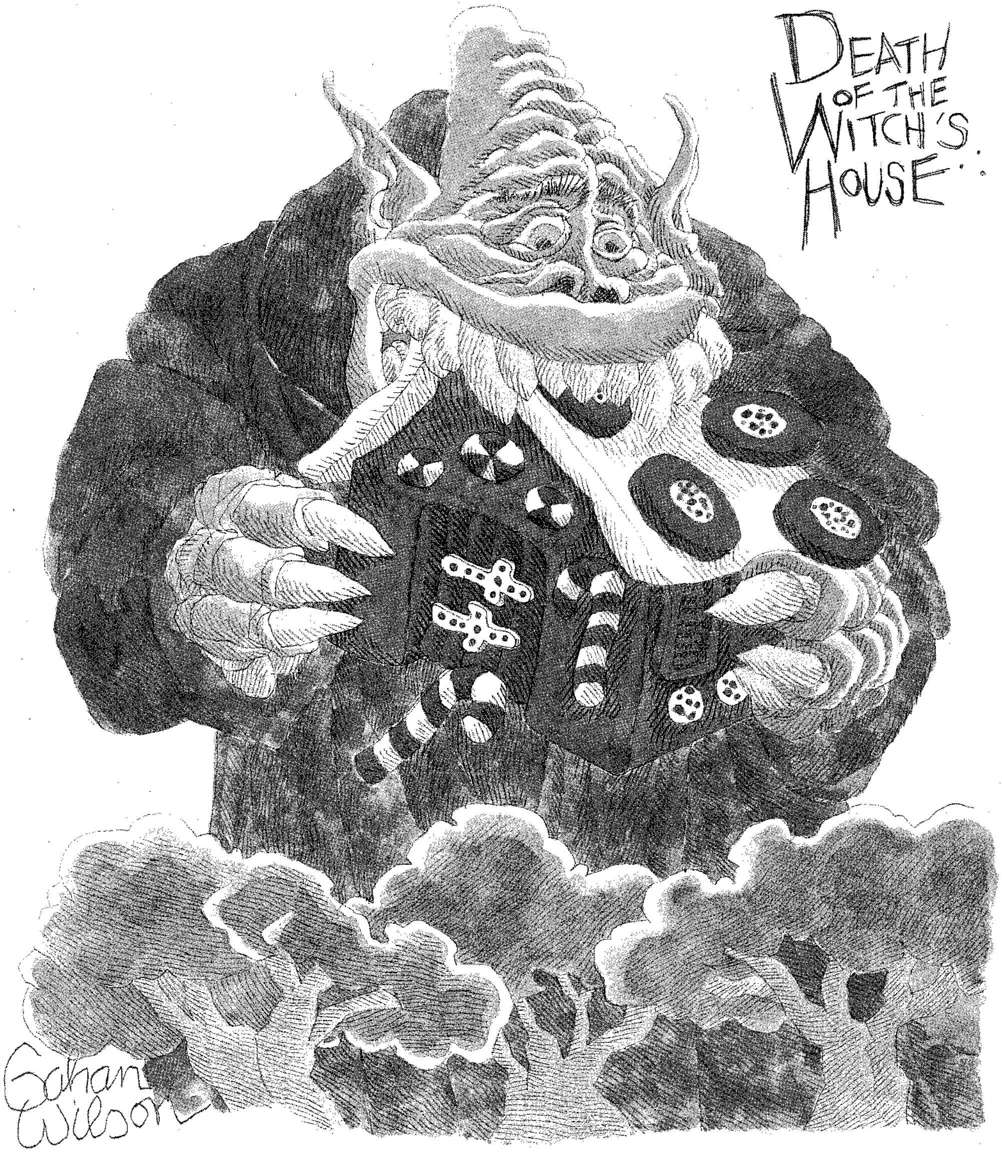


To mark a new production of Engelbert Humperdinck's "Hansel and Gretel" at the Metropolitan Opera, seventeen artists offered their own interpretations of the story. Their works will be on display at Gallery Met, at the Opera House, from November 16th through February. (An extended Portfolio can be seen at newyorker.com.) Above: Ana Juan, "Roundabout the Witch."



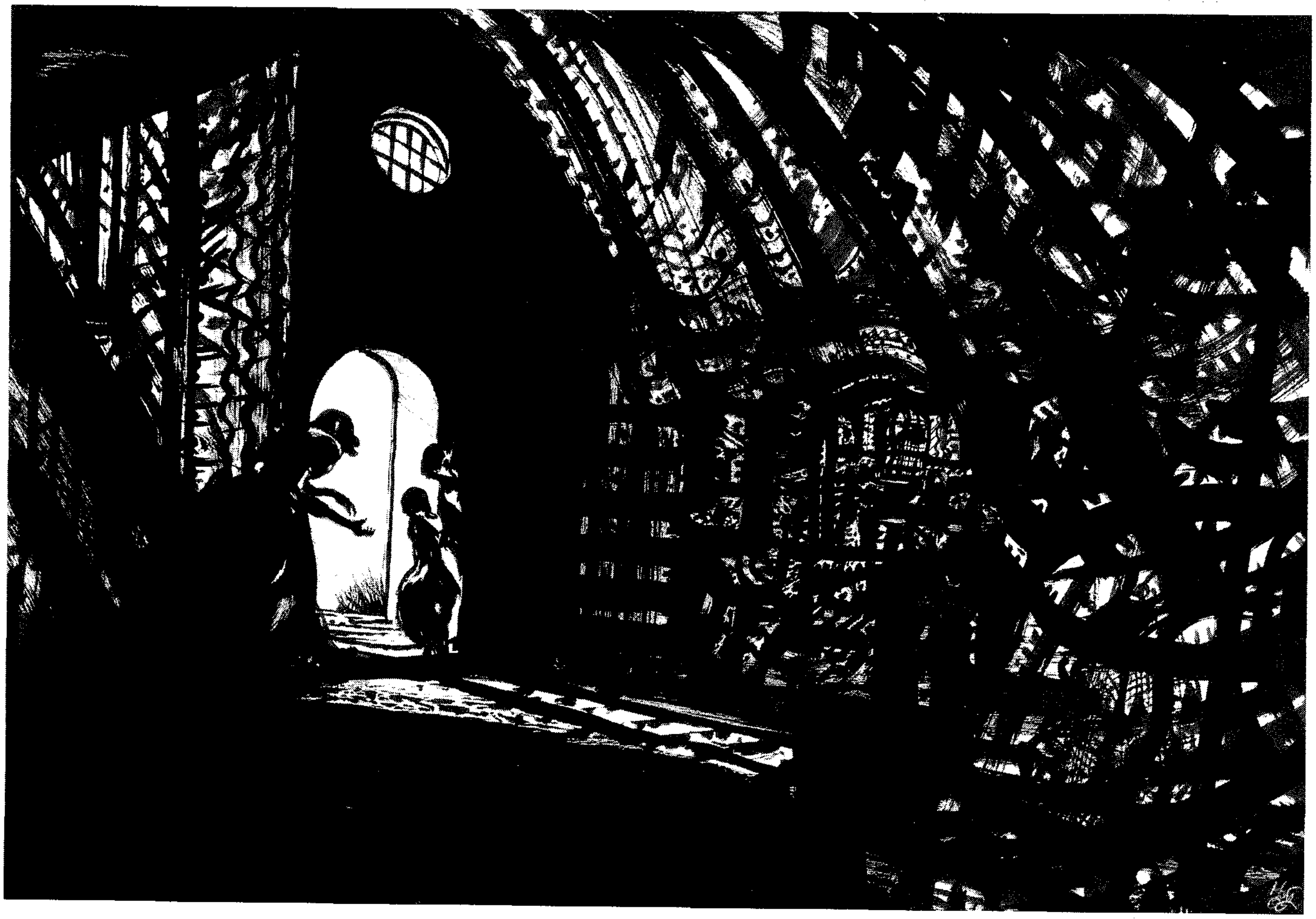
George Condo,
"The Sandman."

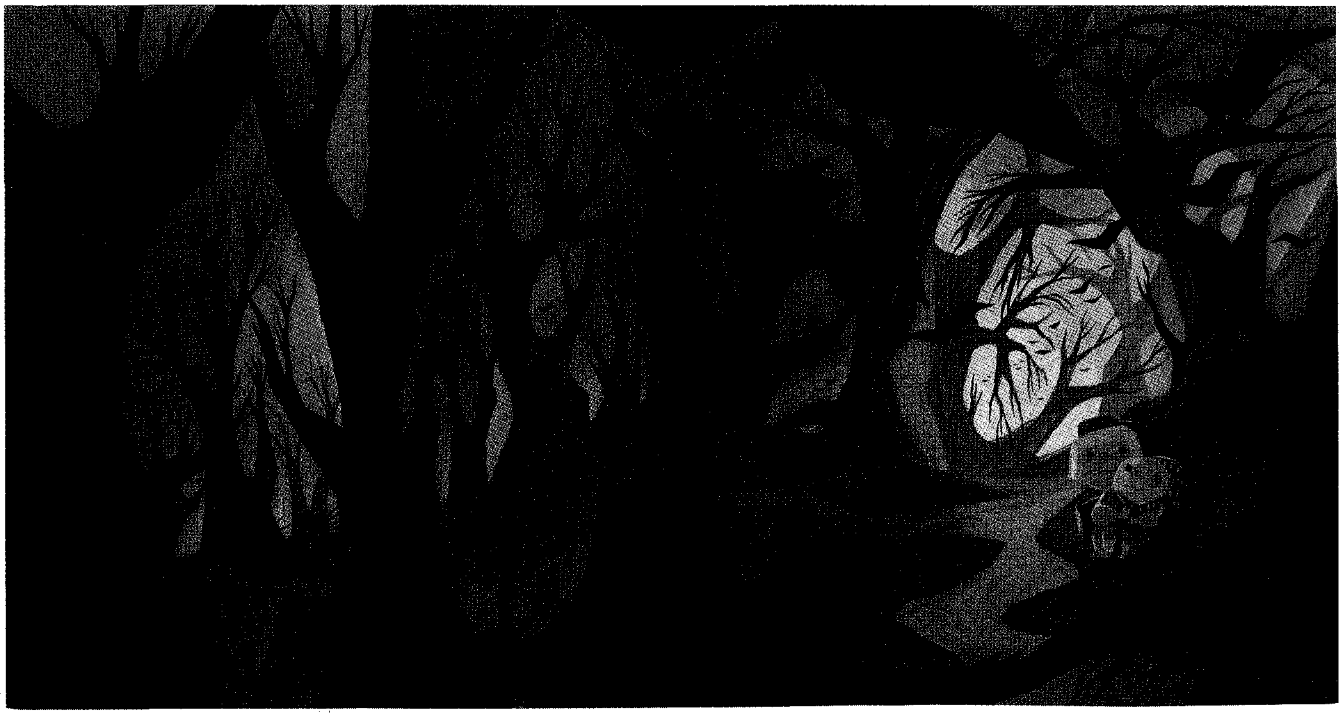

HANSEL AND GRETEL REMEMBER
DAILY NEWS
HERO TOTS BAKE WITCH

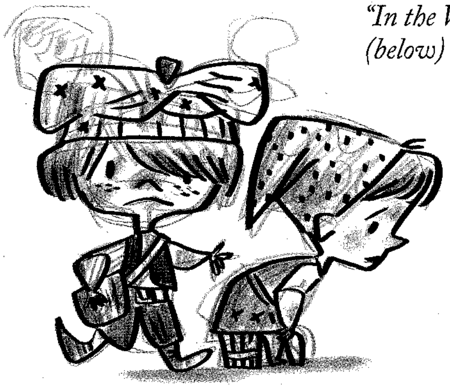

DEATH OF THE WITCH'S HOUSE

Gahan Wilson,
"Hansel and Gretel
Remember" and
"Death of the Witch's
House."

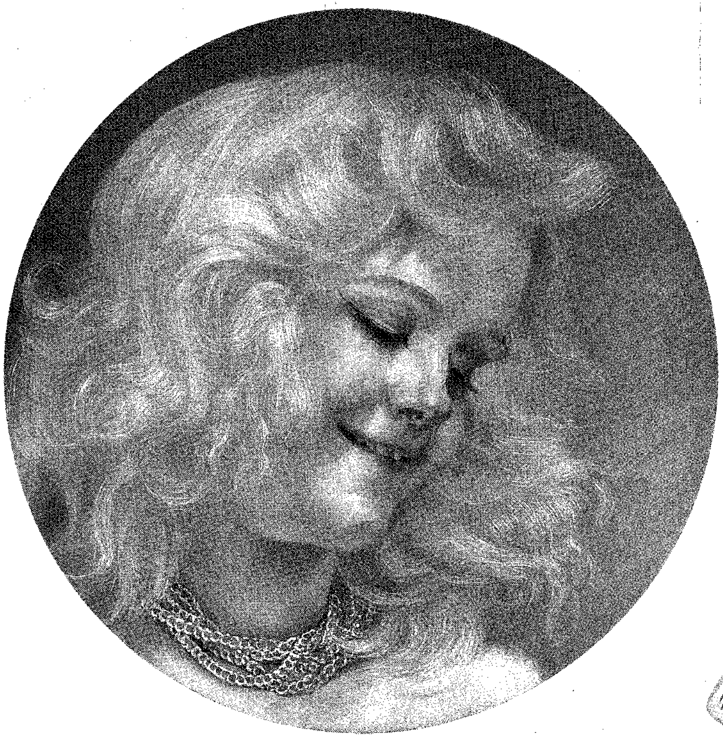
Opposite:
Lorenzo Mattotti,
"Six Scenes from Hansel
and Gretel" (detail).



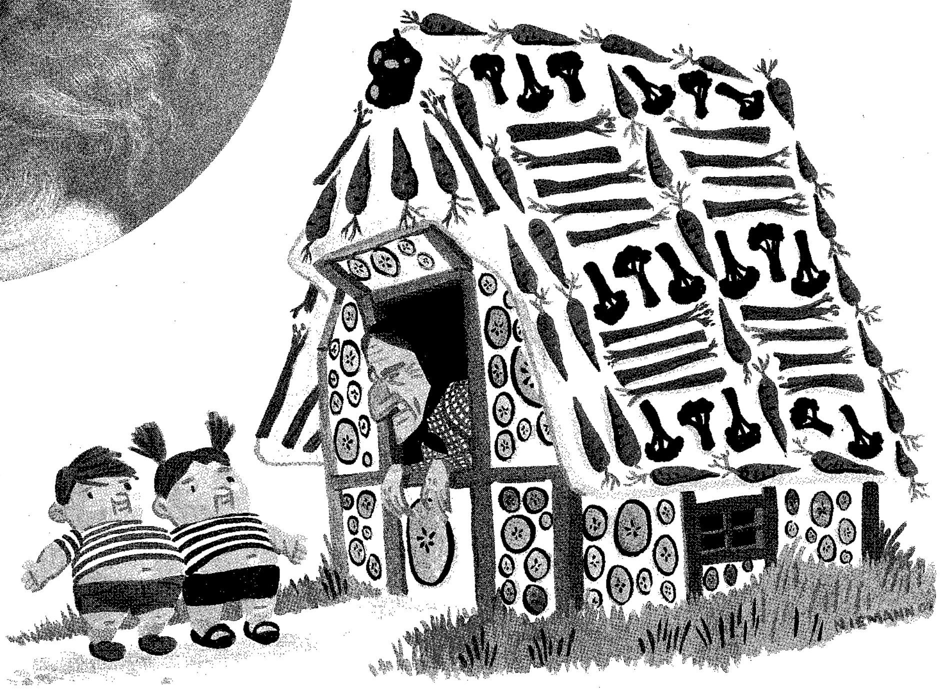




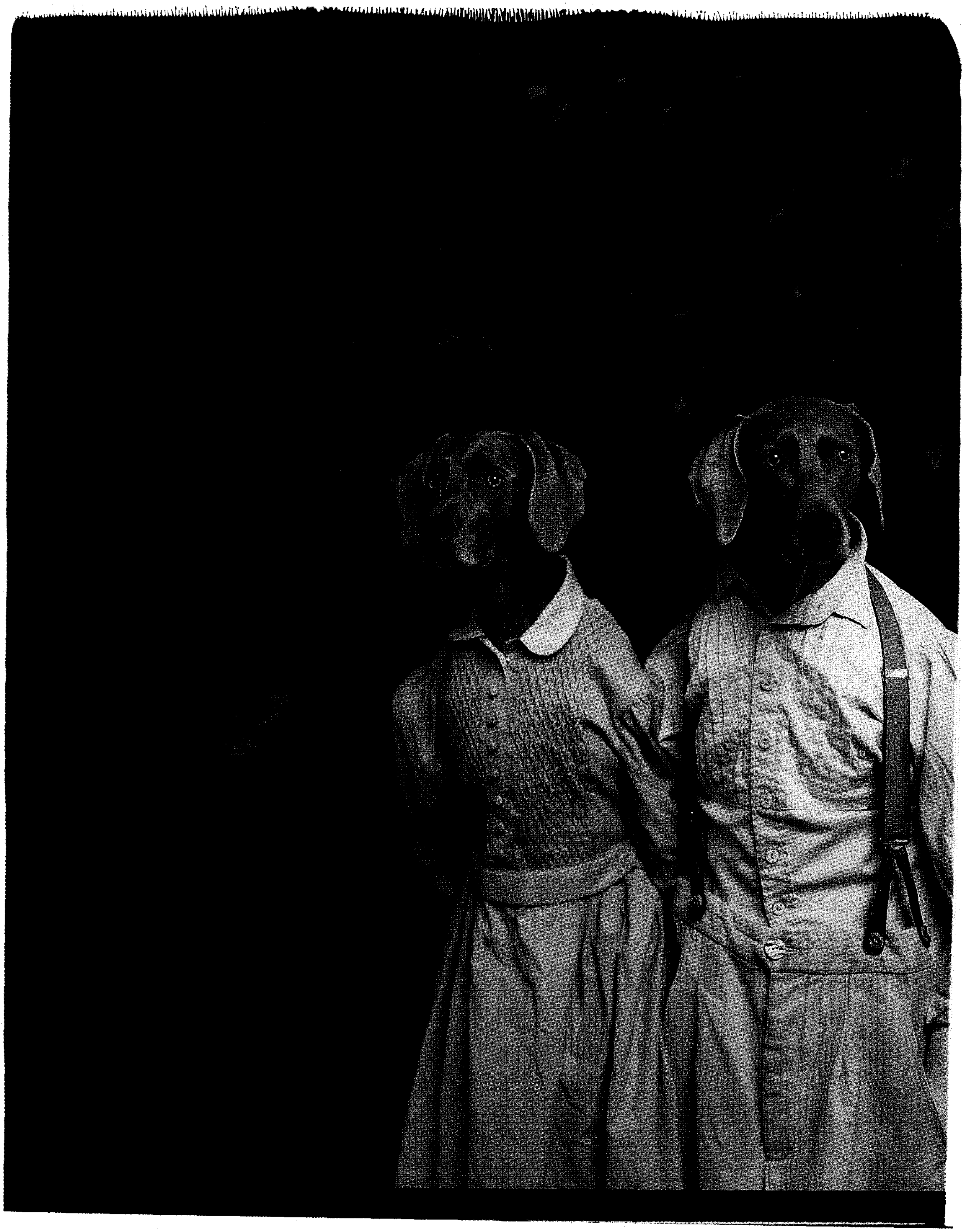
Lou Romano, "In the Woods" and (below) a sketch.



John Currin, "Stepmother."



Christoph Niemann, "Hell's Kitchen."



William Wegman,
"Hansel und Gretel" (detail).

FICTION

THE DOG

BY RODDY DOYLE

She'd been gone for a couple of hours, most of the afternoon—he wasn't sure—but she looked like she'd been in Spain. Or the Sahara. She'd been tied down and tortured, under a big round sun. She was suddenly tanned.

He watched her taking off her coat. He didn't know what color her hair was, the name for it. He sat still and said nothing.

It went back.

They hadn't coped well. He knew that.

His ear had been the start of it. Or a start. Years ago now. Mary had been kissing him. But she'd stopped and he'd heard something, trapped in her throat.

—What's wrong? he'd said.

—Nothing, she'd said. Your ear.

She'd stiffened beside him, but then he felt her kind of unfold, relax again.

—My ear?

—There's a hair on it.

—Hair? he said. There's hair in everyone's ear.

—On, she said.

—What?

—It's on your ear.

—On?

He saw her nod.

—I'll have to see this, he said, and got up.

But he couldn't see it. He put his face right up to the bathroom mirror. He turned his head, so his ear was nearly the only thing he could see. But he couldn't see a hair. He took off his glasses. And he saw it. All on its own. At the bottom, the lobe. Like a mustache hair. He put the glasses back on. The hair was gone. He took them off. And there it was.

He went back to the bedroom. He got into the bed. She was pretending to be asleep, breathing like a baby in an ad.

He dated it back to then. Five years, four years—he wasn't sure. When they stopped growing old together.

He'd shaved it off. He'd never had a mustache and he didn't want one now, growing on his ear. He'd taken his glasses off to do it—he'd had to. He needed the glasses, but sometimes he could see better without them. He took them off to read the paper. He had to put them on to find the fuckin' paper.

She was still taking her coat off. It looked new. He didn't think he'd seen it on her before. It was nice, soft-looking. He didn't know what to call the color of that, either. She was being careful. It must have been new. He said nothing.

Her knickers came after his ear. His revenge, he supposed, but he hadn't meant it that way. It had just happened. He'd been sitting up in the bed, reading. "Berlin: The Downfall, 1945" or "Stalingrad"—one of those big books he always liked, about a city getting hammered in the Second World War. He loved history. He could hear her locking the doors downstairs, and coming up the stairs, shoving the bedroom door open, coming in. It must have been the Stalingrad book, because he'd got to the bit about people eating the rats, and he'd looked away from the page. She was taking her jeans off, her back to him. She was kind of vague there, so he put his glasses back on, and saw them. Her knickers—her thong. New, and black. She was bending, to get her feet out of the jeans. Four decades of arse parked inside a piece of string.

He pretended he was going to vomit. He still regretted it.

He made the gagging sound, and leaned over the side of the bed and let on he was emptying himself. He'd done it before, and she'd always laughed. Not this time.

He hadn't meant to hurt her. He'd thought he was just being funny. She'd said nothing about it.

He Googled menopause, but he soon gave up. Age of onset, cessation of menses; it was boring. Hot flushes—he had one of them every time he went up the stairs. But he kept an eye on her. He clucked sympathetically when he saw her sweating. He brought her a glass of water and put it beside the bed. She stared at him before she thanked him.

The chest hair was next. His. He woke up sweating one morning. The room was bright. The sun was already pushing through the curtains. She was leaning right over him, looking straight down at his chest.

—Gray, she said.

—What?

There was something there, a pain—the memory. She'd done something to him while he was asleep.

—There's gray in your hair.

He was sure of it. She'd pulled the hair on his chest. She looked now like she was going to peck him, the way she was hanging there.

—Did you pull my hair? he said.

He could hear himself ask the question, almost like he wasn't the one talking. He wasn't sure he was awake.

She didn't answer.

—And white, she said.

—Did you?

—What?

—Pull my hair.

—What? Why would I do that?

She said it like she was miles away, or on the phone to someone else. Someone she didn't think much of.

He got up on one of his elbows. He looked down at his chest; he tried to see it properly. His eyes swam a bit. Her back was to him; she was getting up. She held her nightdress down as she climbed out of the bed.

—It's not really something you think about, is it? she said. What happens to you when you get older.

She was standing now, looking behind the curtain, out the window.

—It's a bit horrible, she said.

—It's only hair.

He'd had gray hair for a good while. It had started in his early thirties, on his head. A few at the side, just above his ears. She'd liked it; so she'd said. She'd said it made him look distinguished. A bit like Bill Clinton. You expected the hair on your head to change; you knew it was coming. But not the chest hair, or the pubic stuff. So she was right: it was a bit horrible.

He'd examined himself that morning. He'd looked no different. He took his glasses off so he could look at his face properly. He was still there, the same man. It was frightening, though, how little time you got. You became yourself when you were twenty-three or twenty-four. A few years later, you had an old man's chest hair. It wasn't worth it. He put his glasses back on.

He didn't decide to throw out the statue. One of the saints—he couldn't remember which one, a woman. A present from one of her aunts. He'd just picked it up, walking past it in the hall. Kept walking, into the kitchen, threw it in the bin. Tied the bag, brought it out to the wheelie, dropped it in. Went back to the kitchen and put a new biodegradable bag into the bin. The mark was there on the table, where the statue had been; the varnish was much darker, like a badge—"Something Used to Be Here." She'd never

ELINOR CARUCCI, "SECRET" (2001)/ART + COMMERCE

asked about it; she'd never said anything. He'd never felt guilty. She'd never tried to cover the mark; she'd never rearranged the crap on the table, and neither had he.

But she'd thrown out his medal. Not that he gave a fuck. But she had.

The statue first. They'd both laughed at it, when the aunt was in the taxi, going home, the night she'd given it to them. The big blue eyes, the snakes at the saint's plaster feet. He'd put it on the table in the hall; he'd made room for it. It was him who'd done it. He'd made a ceremony of it. This was the first Christmas they'd been in the house, two years after the wedding. They'd laughed, and she'd kissed him.

He just picked it up and threw it in the bin. He didn't know he was going to do it. He just did. He'd often hoped she'd ask him about it, because he could have told her. It could have been the beginning of something; they'd have talked. But she didn't, and he didn't.

The medal. It was the only one he'd ever won. The Community Games, Football—Under 10s. North Dublin. Runners-up. He remembered the final, losing three-nil, and not caring once he had the medal. And not caring much about the medal, either. His mother had put it away, in the glass cabinet in the front room. She'd given it to him when he'd moved into his own house, along with all his old school reports and his Inter and Leaving Certs and a few photographs: the team in their stripy jerseys, him at the front, smiling and freezing; him and his big sister on the back of a donkey-and-cart, both of them squinting; him in his first suit, the flared trousers, grinning and squinting, the day before his first real job. He could remember his father with the camera. "Smile, smile. Stop bloody squinting." He'd told his father to fuck off and walked straight out to the street. He could remember the noise of the trouser legs rubbing against each other.

She hadn't taken anything else. Just the medal. He hadn't been looking for it. He'd just noticed it, gone. He'd kept the stuff in the big envelope his mother had put it into, with "Joe" in her shaky writing on it. He'd kept it in a drawer in the bedroom, under socks and T-shirts. Over the years, the shape of the medal had been pressed into the paper of the envelope. Not the little footballer, or the "1969," or any of the other details. Just the circular shape. He'd been looking for a sock to match another one, and—he didn't know why—he'd put his finger on the circle and realized there was nothing under it. He took out the envelope and opened it. The medal was gone.

WANTING SUMPTUOUS HEAVENS

No one grumbles among the oyster clans,
And lobsters play their bone guitars all summer.
Only we, with our opposable thumbs, want
Heaven to be, and God to come, again.
There is no end to our grumbling; we want
Comfortable earth and sumptuous Heaven.
But the heron standing on one leg in the bog
Drinks his dark rum all day, and is content.

—*Robert Bly*

He searched the drawer. More than once. He took everything out. He shook all the socks. He slid the whole lot out of the envelope, and put it all back, one thing at a time. He tried the other drawers. He pulled the chest of drawers away from the wall and looked behind it. He took all the drawers out to see if the medal had slipped to the side, if it was standing on its edge on one of the plywood slats that held the drawers in place.

He put everything back.

He had no doubt at all: she'd done it.

But then the dog came into the house. They got a dog. She got the dog. A Jack Russell, a thoroughbred, papers and all. A mad little thing. It was there yapping at his heels when he got home from work.

—What's this? he said.

—What's it look like?

—A dog.

—There you go.

—Whose is it?

—Ours, she said. Mine.

—Serious?

—Yeah.

He looked down at it.

—Let go of me fuckin' trousers, he said.

But he'd liked it, immediately. He'd had dogs when he was a kid. There'd always been a dog. Dogs were all right.

She gave it the name. Emma. From a book she liked, and the film, by Jane Austen. But it still ran around the kitchen in circles and knocked its head against the rungs beneath the chairs. It never stopped. It was always charging around the gaff, or asleep, beside its mat at the back door. Never on the mat, always right beside it. It was a great dog. Didn't shed too much hair, was too small to jump onto the good furniture, learned to scratch at the door and yap when it wanted to get outside. Only shat in the kitchen now and again, and always looked apologetic. So it was grand. But he soon began to realize that they weren't living with the same animal. She talked to it; she had a special voice she used. She'd buy a bag of jelly babies and share them, one for her, one for the dog. There was a child in the house, before he really understood.

He got up one morning and she was down there before him, filling the kettle. The dog had taken a dump beside the mat.

—Emma had an accident, she said.

—As long as it wasn't you, he said.

She laughed and he bent down, got the dog by the scruff, and pushed its snout into the shite. He unlocked the back door with his free hand and threw the dog outside, lobbed it gently, so it would land on its feet.

And she exploded. She actually hit him. She smacked him on the back, a loud whack that didn't hurt but shocked him. She hit him again. More of a thump this time—his shoulder.

—What was that for?

—What d'you think you're doing?

The two of them breathing hard.

He didn't hit her back. He didn't even think about it, or lift his hand or anything.

He knew immediately what she

meant, and why she was furious. Now that she was. He could see.

—That's how you train them, he said.

—No, it isn't.

—It is.

It was how they'd trained their dogs at home, when he was a kid. Nose in the dirt, out the door. It had always worked.

—What other way is there?

He never mentioned the fact that she'd hit him. He never brought it up again, that the only one who'd ever been violent was her.

She signed them up for training classes. One evening a week, for eight weeks. They brought the dog to a big barn of a place, an actual barn beside an abandoned farmhouse, at the back of the airport. It was a strange, flat landscape. There was the ruin of a castle on one side of the road and the airport runway on the other, just a couple of fields away. He could look straight up at the bellies of the planes. The dog trainers were lovely, three soft-spoken girls who loved the dogs and the racket and the smell. He enjoyed it. They both did. The dog was quick on the uptake, all the sits and the stays, and it was fine with the other dogs. He enjoyed getting there, and coming home. They had to drive through Ballymun and over the M50 motorway. They'd comment on the changes, all the old tower blocks knocked down, the new buildings going up. There was one time, on the road that ran right beside the runway, they saw something ahead—two things—getting clearer and sharper. It was two horses, pulling buggies, racing, on both sides of the road. He drove onto the hard shoulder, and they watched the horses trot past, and two Traveller kids in the buggies—they didn't even look at the car as they flew by.

—Jesus.

—That's disgraceful.

—Is it?

—It's dangerous.

—That's for sure.

He got out of the car—she did, too—and they watched the buggies till they were too far away, waiting to see if any other cars or trucks came at them. But the road was empty.

—I wonder who won, she said.

—Don't know, he said. A draw. I'd love to do it, myself.

—Yeah, she said. Not here, though.

—No.

They got back in and went on to the training center.

Another time, they drove past a family of Romanians, Gypsies, about seven of them, walking along the same road, beside the runway. It was like they'd just climbed over the perimeter fence and they were making a break for the city. But, really, they were strolling along, and he'd no idea where to. He couldn't even imagine. There wasn't a shop or a house.

—Why would they want to be out here? she asked.

—Reminds them of home.

—Stop that.

—They're left alone out here, he said. That's my guess.

—You're probably right, she said. It's like a no man's land, isn't it?

—Yeah, he said. It's nowhere.

—It's sad, though. Isn't it?

—I suppose it is.

Driving back home, after the training, they saw the Romanians again, off the road this time, on the island in the center of the M50 roundabout; there were kids going into the bushes. He realized it slowly, and so did she. The car was off the roundabout and going through Ballymun before she spoke.

—They live in there, she said.

—What?

—The Romanians, she said. They're living in the roundabout.

—It looked like it, all right.

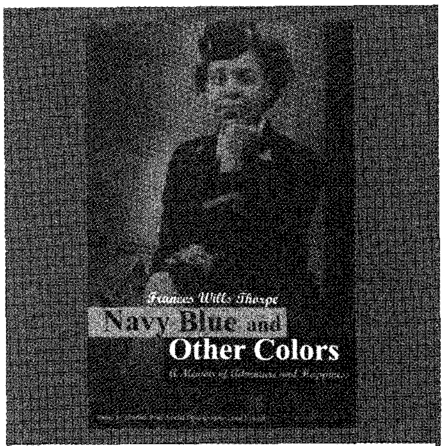
—In the bushes.

—Yeah.

—Jesus.

—Yeah.

They brought the dog to the barn every Wednesday night, for the eight weeks. The dog could walk, stop, sit, stay, and shit, and there were no more rows or misunderstandings. She fed the dog. He picked the shit up off the grass in the back garden. And he brought the dog down to Dollymount Strand for a run, on the mornings when he didn't have an early start. And those mornings were the best thing about having the dog. He'd park the car and walk toward the



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By Frances Wills Thorpe
(deceased)
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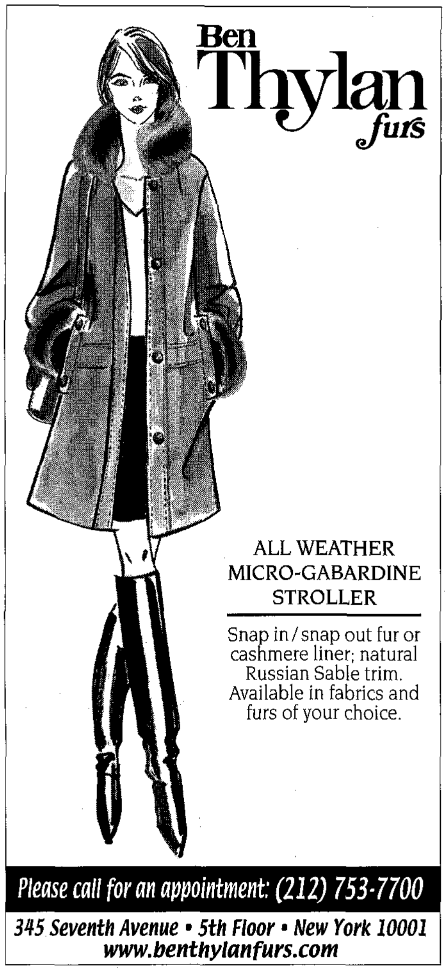
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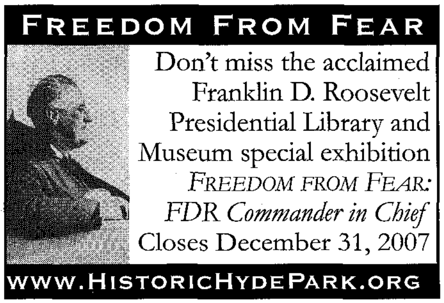
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wooden bridge, with the docks and the city behind it, and Dun Laoghaire to the left, across the bay, and the mountains. He saw herons one morning, two of them, standing still in the water. He'd never seen herons before; he hadn't even known that there were herons in Ireland. They didn't budge when the dog ran at them, until the last second. Then they were up together, and they flew off slowly, dragging their legs behind them, and they settled again, in the shallow water farther down the beach. It thrilled him to see that. He loved the whole thing. Even when it rained—when the rain came at him sideways, straight off the sea, and he was soaking before he'd really started—he loved it. But he'd never have done it on his own. He'd never have been comfortable by himself, walking along the empty beach in the morning. He'd have felt strange. What was he doing there, all by himself? But with the dog it was fine. He didn't have to explain anything, to himself or to anyone else. He was walking the dog. Throwing a ball. Both of them getting their exercise.

Then the dog went missing.

He came home, and Mary was already there. Her eyes were huge and angry and terrified.

—You left the gate open.

—I didn't, he said. What gate?

—The side gate.

—I didn't.

—It was open.

—I didn't touch it, he said. Oh fuck, the dog.

He'd forgotten about the dog.

—I went out, she said. I couldn't find her.

—She'll be grand, he said. Hang on.

He went out to his car and came back with the street atlas. He divided the neighborhood; he stayed calm. They'd get into their cars. She'd go right, he'd go left.

—She can't be gone too far.

He didn't believe that. He was already thinking about the next dog.

—D'you want a cup of tea before we go? he asked her.

He thought he was handling it well. She was crying. He wanted to hug her, but it was a long time since they'd done that. He knew she was angry. He'd look—he'd genuinely look for the dog. He'd stay out all night. He'd search everywhere. And he'd be delighted if he found it—he could feel it in his chest. But they'd been away all day. Nine hours. He'd left first—he remembered shouting "Seeyeh" up the stairs, just before he'd closed the front door. But he hadn't been outside, in the back garden. He'd let the dog out—he remembered that. He'd been first down to the kitchen. The dog had stood up and stretched. He'd gone straight over to the door, to let it out. He'd had his coffee and his banana, and he'd gone. But the gate. He hadn't opened it. The night before? No. He couldn't remember touching the gate. It hadn't happened.

They went out to the cars together.

—What if she comes back when we're gone?

—It's not likely, is it?

—I just thought—

—I know, but she's never been out on her own before.

—I know.

—Let's stick to Plan A, he said. What d'you think?

—O.K., she said.

He was looking at the side gate now, open.

—Would you prefer to stay here? he said. In case.

—No, she said. It's better if we both do it.

—Grand.

They didn't find the dog. He stayed out till after midnight. He drove past the house, twice, until he saw her car parked outside. Then he parked his own and went in.

—No luck?

—No, she said.

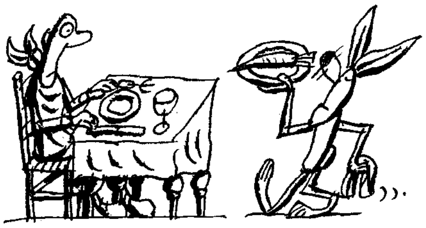
She didn't look at him. She was sitting at the kitchen table. Then she looked, and stopped.

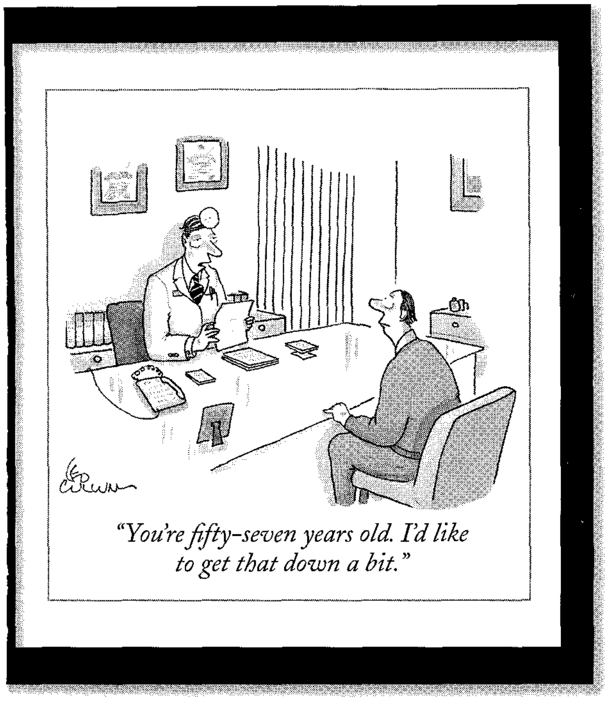
—The bloody gate, she said.

—It wasn't me, he said. I don't think it was. It isn't bin day.

—Bin day?

—Yeah. Bin day. The day in the week when I put out the bin. When I open the side gate. Every fuckin' week for the last twenty fuckin' years. Sorry.





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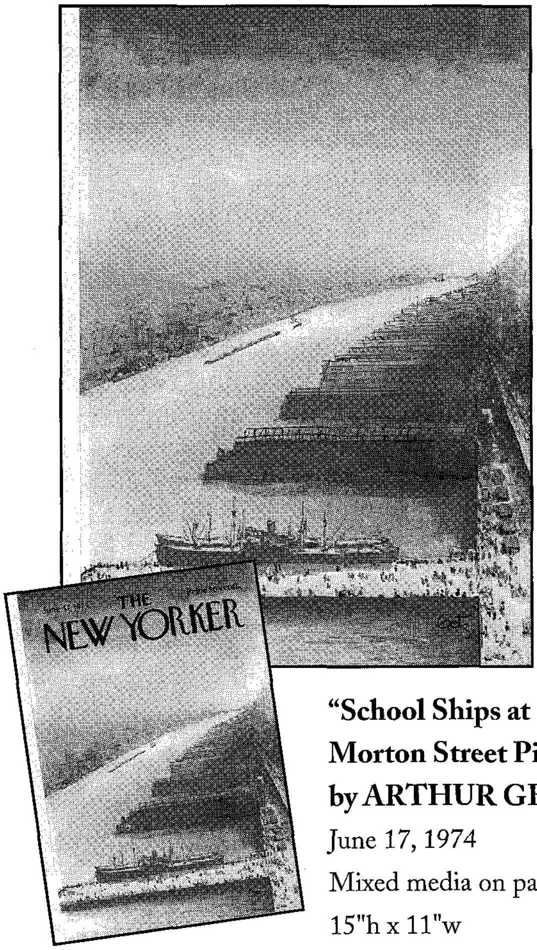

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He sat. He stood up. She looked at him.

—I'm sorry, too, she said.

He sat.

—What'll we do?

—I don't know.

They went up to bed together and fell asleep, more or less, together. He was first out again in the morning. He didn't shout "Seeyeh" up the stairs. He couldn't.

He hadn't opened the gate.

He looked at it before he started the car. It was still open. He got out of the car and shut it.

It was open again when he got home.

—In case Emma comes back, she told him.

—Oh, he said. Fair enough.

They were out again that night, putting up little posters she'd designed and photocopied, in the shops and on lampposts. "Missing," and a photo of the dog, then "Emma—Beloved Pet." And their phone number and her mobile number. He went left, she went right. He was home first. He fell asleep on the couch. She was in bed when he went up. She wasn't asleep—he knew—but she didn't move or say anything.

They got a few calls.

—I seen your dog.

—How much is the reward?

—I ate Emma.

Kids mostly, messing. And a couple of weird ones. Three in the morning.

—Hello? Are you Emma's dad?

—Emma's a dog.

—Yes.

He was putting the phone down. He could hear the woman at the other end still talking. He put it back to his ear.

—She asked me to tell you she's fine. She's happy.

—She's a fuckin' dog.

—Yes.

He lay back on the bed and knew he'd be getting up in a minute. Sleep was gone.

—Was that someone about Emma? Mary asked.

—Yeah.

—Another nut?

—Maybe we should take the posters down.

—No.

—O.K. You're right. We'll keep at it.

Then there was the Web site. She showed it to him—www.missingdogs.ie. She'd opened her own page. The same photo of the dog; the location last seen—a little map, their house filled in red. The dog's personality, "outgoing."

—Will people look at this? he asked.

—Yes, they will, she said. Dog-lovers will.

—Grand.

—And there are links to other sites, she said. All over the world.

Some prick in Hong Kong was staring at the picture of their dog.

He said nothing.

Nothing.

That was the way their life had drifted. They never recovered from the dog. They didn't get another one. He wasn't blaming the dog. Things had been heading that way before the dog. The dog had even saved them for a while, or slowed down the drift. They'd had something new in common for a couple of months, and the excursions to the land behind the airport.

He hadn't opened the gate. He hadn't left it open.

But he'd failed. He could have pretended. Cried a bit, let her console him, take over—he didn't know. It wasn't about the gate. It was about grief. She grieved. He didn't. Simple as that. He should have pretended. It would have been a different kind of honesty. He knew that now. He thought he did.

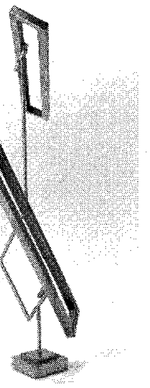
He'd said they should get a new one. She'd stared at him and walked away. It wasn't a house you could walk away in; she had to walk out. She came back. They had another row, and he walked out. It was his turn. He stayed away for hours. He went to the pictures. He came back.

The walking out stopped. The rows stopped. The talking, too; it was a wordless life. They'd drifted. But, actually, they hadn't drifted, and that was another problem. One of them should have gone. They should have looked at each other one night, over the dinner or something, and smiled, and known that enough was enough. But that wise moment had never happened. He hadn't let it. He'd wished for it, but he hadn't let it happen. He hadn't let his eyes sit on hers.

Now she was taking off her new coat.

He didn't know her. Didn't know her hair, didn't know why she'd have wanted a tan in January—didn't really know how it was done. Some sort of a lamp, or a bed. He didn't know.

—Your coat's nice, he said. ◆



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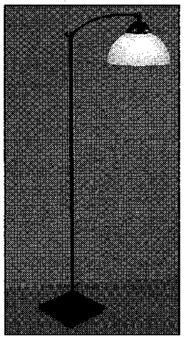

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THE CURRENT CINEMA

DRUG WARRIORS

“American Gangster.”

BY DAVID DENBY

Frank Lucas (Denzel Washington), the dazzling thug in “American Gangster,” is a man particular in his ways, and, early in the movie, he sees something that bothers him. For years, Frank, a real-life figure, was a protégé of the Harlem crime boss Ellsworth (Bumpy) Johnson, and when Bumpy dies, in 1968, the wake at his house draws in the notables—local politicians, assorted mafiosi, and Harlem ruffians, one of whom, an insolent dude named Tango, puts a damp glass of Scotch down on Bumpy’s lacquered dining-room table. Frank picks it up, dries off the table, and places the glass on a coaster. For Frank, there is a correct and an incorrect way of doing things, and property like Bumpy’s, acquired after long and arduous criminal activity, should be revered. Tango lacks judgment and class—he’s a noisy show-off—and some months later Frank, having taken over Bumpy’s operation, draws a gun on Tango and, as dozens of people look on, shoots him in the head. Frank is eliminating a rival and also teaching a lesson in etiquette.

At roughly the same time, Richie Roberts (Russell Crowe), a real-life Essex County, New Jersey, police detective, and his excitable partner, Javier (Javy) Rivera (John Ortiz), discover about a million dollars in unmarked bills in the trunk of a car. Javy reasons that the money has been lifted by a cop during a drug bust, so if he and Richie turn it in they will, in effect, be turning a cop in. Javy is a junkie and a liar, but his logic in this case is impeccable. (We later discover, in an intertextual flourish, that the money may be linked to the French Connection.) Ignoring Javy, Richie counts out the bills in a station house as the upholders of the law eye him balefully. Like Frank Serpico, another honest cop of the period, Richie becomes a pariah, and so obsessed with his job that no one can live with him. His wife takes their son and leaves.

Russell Crowe is thick-shouldered and a little heavy in the gut; he gives Richie a quick stumpy walk, and he leans forward when he sits, as if he needed to be close to the ground in order to think. Denzel Washington stands upright, wears perfectly tailored suits, and smiles like the captain of a luxury liner entertaining royal guests. In style, Richie and Frank are as different as a badger and a hawk, but “American Gangster,” which was produced by Brian Grazer, written by Steven Zaillian, and directed by Ridley Scott, presents them as equals. They are both ambitious, punctilious, violent men. When they finally meet, they regard each other as spiritual brothers. “American Gangster,” which is based on Mark Jacobson’s *New York* profile of Lucas from 2000 (with some parts fictionalized), is a febrile cops-and-robbers picture that has been scaled as an epic. Set in the years 1968 to 1975, it encompasses the rise of black entrepreneurial capitalism in its criminal version, the corruption of law enforcement, and the shadowy crossover between the two. In passing, the filmmakers suggest that America’s heroin epidemic in those years grew out of the disintegration of Army morale during the Vietnam War, when thousands of G.I.s got hooked. Scott fills the screen with scenes of Americans shooting up in Bangkok and Harlem, getting rich on crime, and having a terrific time. It’s as if the country were transfixed by war, drugs, and violence, with no one but the dour, troubled Nixon as an authority figure. The references to film classics of the period acknowledge the way the crime wave, and the resistance to it, was mythologized even as it was happening. The movie is a descendant not just of “The French Connection” but of the raucous blaxploitation romps of the early seventies. It’s “Super Fly”—which also had a drug-dealer hero—without the cartoon cruddiness and the put-on violence and with an enormous increase of range and detail: How is the drug business actually done? How do mules get the stuff from one place to another?

The pace of the movie is rapid, almost hectic, the touch glancing. Until the confrontation between Frank and Richie at the end, nothing stays on the screen for long, although Scott, working in the street, or in clubs and at parties, packs as much as he can into the corners of shots, and shapes even the most casual scenes decisively. “American Gangster” has been made with great panache and drive. And it pushes us hard—it asks us to accept the audacity of Frank’s methods as not only brave but wittily inventive. Flying to Bangkok in 1968, Frank, against all advice, makes his way through the jungle to northern Thailand, where a courtly Chinese officer—a member of the long-defeated Kuomintang—supervises vast poppy fields. The officer, who may never have seen a black American before, has trouble believing that Frank is capable of taking a hundred or more kilos of uncut heroin into the United States without sponsorship (that is, without the Mafia). But the dope, in pure form, arrives in New York (in spectacularly bizarre fashion), gets cut by naked female “table workers” in Harlem, and is sold on the street at twice the strength and half the price of what the Mafia is selling. Frank has

Russell Crowe and Denzel Washington in Ridley Scott's new movie.

JOHN RITTER

achieved the retailer's dream: he has eliminated the middleman and the competition in a single blow.

Later, he summons his five brothers from North Carolina and sets them up in dry-cleaning and auto-repair shops that serve as distribution points; he also buys his elderly mother (Ruby Dee) a huge white-columned house in New Jersey, where she presides at jubilant family dinners. Like many modern gangsters, Frank wants to turn crime into a rational enterprise; he wants to lead an orderly and loving family life, and to play his game so stealthily that he will never be tainted by what he does. And the audience may go along with his self-conception, which also appears to be the moviemakers' conception—that Frank is a cool guy, always shrewd enough to put a coaster under the drinks and leave no marks behind. Denzel Washington's movie-star glow is all-powerful here. Grinning broadly between fits of rage, his Frank Lucas is quicker, smarter, and more charming than anyone else around. He takes the overt menace out of such lines as "I'm a busy man, I got no time to be going to anyone's funeral." He makes it seem less a threat of murder (which it is) than a casual joke.

Frank doesn't have to worry much about being caught by the N.Y.P.D., since groups of narcotics officers, led by a goon in black leather (Josh Brolin), occupy themselves with shaking down dealers or selling impounded drugs back to the Mafia. (The movie presents these guys as outrageous creeps who put law enforcement on a lower level than outright criminality.) Trying to get clear of the force, Richie accepts a federal assignment to set up his own group of irregulars. Scott introduces us to this skanky-looking bunch in a New Jersey bar, but he doesn't do much with them. The driving force is always Richie, whom Crowe plays with shambling, low-key intensity. He keeps his voice down and stays calm and logical—as if he knew that it was the only way to compete with Washington's bravura.

Our loyalties are split between the hero of virtue and the hero of vice. We don't have to choose, which is fine—irresponsibility is one of the pleasures of narrative movies. But can we accept the movie's glorification of Frank Lucas in the terms in which it's offered? It's true that movie audiences have always relished gangsters. They act out our fantasies of unlimited aggression, and when they are punished with death we are purged of the guilt we've felt from enjoying their rampages. The greatest gangster movies, however, deepen this transaction, taking us closer to the gangster's hopes and illusions, and then turning them inside out. In "The Godfather: Part II," Michael Corleone grows in power and then ravages his family—the thing he most wanted to protect—and we can see him rotting like a dead oak. In "Goodfellas," Ray Liotta's narration revels in the abundant pleasures of criminality,

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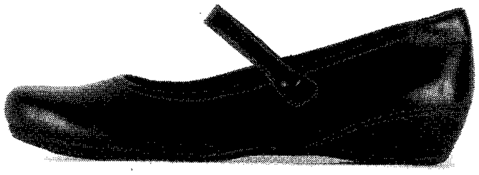

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN: Photographs for The New Yorker

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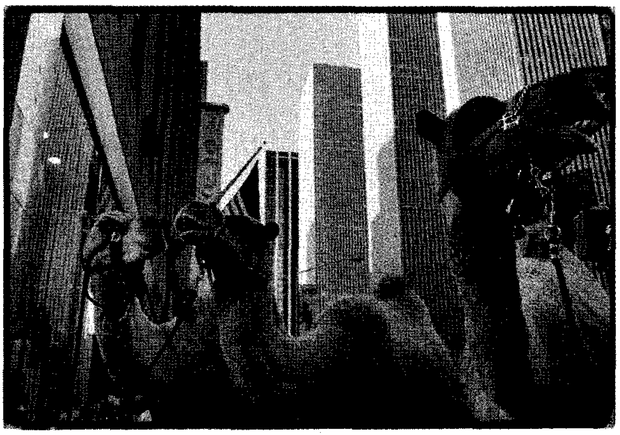

Joyful and idiosyncratic, *Goings On About Town* is quintessentially
Sylvia Plachy, and quintessentially New York.

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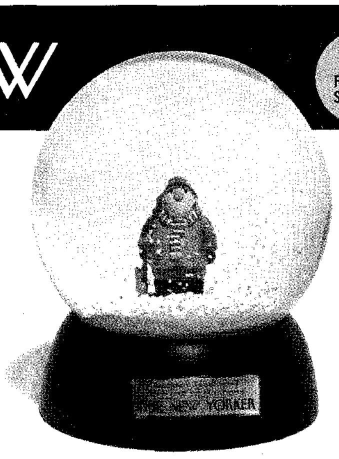

but, as the bad times keep coming, the narration turns anxious and, finally, harrowing. In "American Gangster," however, Frank's ascent is presented simply—not with irony, or as a mini-tragedy, or as a cruel joke on his own community, but as a long-delayed victory of black capitalism. The Mafia, represented by Dominic Cattano (Armand Assante), an immensely dignified grandee, condescends to Frank but then offers to buy some of his product at a discounted rate. The Mafia, in effect, works for Frank, who winds up again and again impressing people not disposed to be impressed by a black man. The movie associates him with Muhammad Ali and, for an instant, with Martin Luther King, Jr. Frank's success, we're meant to believe, is a strike against racism.

It's not as if Zaillian and Scott ignore the results of Frank's trade. On the contrary, there are innumerable shots of needles going into the arms of black men and women in Harlem, who then waver from the dope like palm fronds in the heat. But none of this devastation alters the approving portrayal of Frank. After a while, the shallowness of his characterization and the movie's glib impassivity become a little unnerving, and viewers may ask why it's supposed to be better that hundreds, maybe thousands, of people in Harlem were destroyed by black gangsters rather than by Italians. Near the end of the movie, Frank's mother, in the iconic person of Ruby Dee, slaps him across the face, but that moral judgment comes too late, and it isn't prepared for.

When is cool no longer cool? In the documentary "Frank Lucas," to be aired on BET's series "American Gangster" on October 31st, you see the real Frank Lucas, now in his late seventies. He is every bit as gifted as you would expect. He's also boastful, cynical, and, as far as we can see, dead to the bottom of the place where his soul should be. ♦

From the Washington Post.

Despite the rougher times, IHOP Corp. has watched its revenue crepe upward, showing a 2.5 percent uptick in second-quarter sales this year compared to last.

At least the company isn't waffling.

RUNNING ON FUMES

Does the "car of the future" have a future?

BY ELIZABETH KOLBERT

The average new car gets fewer miles to the gallon than Henry Ford's Model T got.

OTTO STEININGER

On September 29, 1993, President Bill Clinton, Vice-President Al Gore, the chief executives of G.M., Chrysler, and Ford, and the head of the United Auto Workers gathered in the White House Rose Garden to talk about cars. Clinton opened his remarks by reminiscing about his first—a 1952 Henry J that his stepfather had salvaged from a fire—and then about one of his "most prized possessions": a 1967 ice-blue Mustang convertible. "I think when I left my home it was the thing that I most regretted leaving behind," he said of the Mustang. "The other people who drove on the roads in my home state, however, were immensely relieved.

"I think that all of us have our car-crazy moments and have those stories," Clinton went on. "Today, we're going to try to give America a new car-crazy chapter in her rich history—to launch a technological venture as ambitious as any our nation has ever attempted." The aim of the venture, the President explained, was to "develop affordable, attractive cars that are up to three times more fuel-efficient than today's cars." In addition to being moderately priced and energy-efficient, the new cars were supposed to be safe, comfortable, and recyclable. The automakers and the federal government would design the vehicles jointly—the government would provide much of the funding, and make available technologies that had been developed for military use—with the understanding that at the end of a decade the manufacturers would build prototypes of sedans capable of getting eighty miles to the gallon.

The project was formally known as the Partnership for a New Generation of Vehicles, and early reports from those involved were promising. By 1997, participants had settled on the specs of the "super car," as it became known: the sedan would be a lightweight, diesel-electric hybrid. (Diesel engines, because they use a higher compression ratio, consume less fuel per mile than gasoline engines do.) By 2000, the Big Three had all produced concept cars, which were unveiled with much fanfare at the North American Auto Show, in Detroit. G.M.'s car, which was called the Precept, came equipped with two electric motors, one mounted on each axle. Ford's Prodigy featured an aluminum body and rear-facing cameras in place of side-view mirrors, and the Dodge ESX3 was made in large part out of plastic.

The concept cars were wheeled out, then wheeled away, never to be seen again. In January, 2002, just months before the prototypes of the vehicles were supposed to be delivered and after more than a billion dollars of federal money had been spent, Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham announced that the Bush Administration was scrapping the project. When he delivered the announcement, Abraham was flanked by top executives from the Big Three, at least one of whom—G.M.'s chairman, Jack Smith—had stood next to President Clinton when he launched the program, eight years earlier. Abraham explained—and the auto executives seemed to agree—that the program had been based on a fundamentally flawed premise. The future of the car didn't lie with diesel hybrids or any other technology that would allow vehicles to get eighty miles to the gallon. "We can do better than that," Abraham declared. The Administration and the automakers, he said, were undertaking a new, even more ambitious venture, called FreedomCAR. The goal of this project was to produce vehicles that would run on pure hydrogen.

So will a "super car" or a "FreedomCAR" or a "hypercar" or any of the other revolutionary new cars that have been proposed ever get built? Iain Carson and Vijay V. Vaitheeswaran, the authors of "Zoom: The Global Race to Fuel the Car of the Future" (Twelve; $27.99), an-

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swer this question with a qualified "yes." Carson, who covers the transportation industry for *The Economist*, and Vaitheeswaran, a writer who holds an engineering degree from M.I.T., are "techno-optimists," as opposed to the "eco-pessimists" they sometimes deride. Yet their argument rests on an account of global trends that is nothing short of terrifying.

Consider what's happening in India and China. As Carson and Vaitheeswaran point out, car ownership in both countries has been and still remains, by U.S. standards, almost absurdly low. There are nine personal vehicles per thousand eligible drivers in China and eleven for every thousand Indians, compared with 1,148 for every thousand Americans. But incomes in the two countries are rising so rapidly—the Chinese economy grew by eleven per cent last year and is expected to grow by the same amount this year—that millions of vehicleless families will soon be in a position to buy automobiles. Assuming that incomes continue to rise, in a few years tens of millions of families will be buying their first cars, and eventually hundreds of millions. (To satisfy increasing demand in India, the country's second-largest auto manufacturer, Tata Motors, is set to start producing a four-door known as the one-lakh car—a lakh is a hundred thousand rupees—that will sell for the equivalent of twenty-five hundred dollars.) Were China and India to increase their rates of car ownership to the point where per-capita oil consumption reached just half of American levels, the two countries would burn through a hundred million additional barrels a day. (Currently, total global oil use is eighty-six million barrels a day.) Were they to match U.S. consumption levels, they would require an extra two hundred million barrels a day. It's difficult to imagine how such enormous quantities of oil could be found, but, if they could, the result would be catastrophe. "Just consider the scale of the potential problem—for instance, the effect on global warming of seven hundred and fifty million more cars in India and China, belching carbon dioxide," Carson and Vaitheeswaran write.

It's tough for Americans (or, in the case of Carson, a Scotsman) to argue that, for the sake of the planet, citizens in developing countries shouldn't buy cars. It's very nearly as tough to imagine Americans deciding, for the sake of the planet, to give up driving. Since the planet can't handle ever-increasing numbers of gasoline-consuming, CO_2-emitting vehicles, it follows, Carson and Vaitheeswaran argue, that a radically new kind of car will have to be invented. They aren't particularly clear on how this car will work—they are keen on a number of (mostly unproved) technologies—or on who, exactly, will develop it. But they are convinced that once the right steps are taken—Carson and Vaitheeswaran advocate a stiff carbon tax, and urge Americans to support any politician with the courage to propose such a measure—it will appear. Indeed, they maintain that the "race" to create the "car of the future" is already under way.

"The good news is that a promising suite of technologies—ranging from flex-fuel ethanol engines to plug-in hybrids to hydrogen fuel cells—finally offers a way to move beyond oil and the internal combustion engine," Carson and Vaitheeswaran write. In keeping with their book's generally upbeat mood, the two manage to tell the story of the Partnership for a New Generation of Vehicles as a kind of automotive comedy. Japanese automakers, excluded from the project, mistakenly took Detroit at its word. They assumed that the Big Three actually intended to develop super-efficient vehicles, and, to protect themselves, they stepped up their own research efforts. Within a few years, Honda had introduced the Insight, and Toyota had introduced the Prius; both got nearly fifty miles to the gallon. (Carson and Vaitheeswaran are adamant that the Prius is not the car of the future, though they give Toyota high marks for forward thinking.) The Big Three were then forced to play catch-up: Ford eventually licensed hybrid technology from the Japanese. However "the car of the future" functions, the book predicts that its appearance will transform the American auto industry, either by reinvigorating it or by finally killing it off. In the words of Lee Iacocca, Carson and Vaitheeswaran urge the Big Three to "lead, follow, or get out of the way."

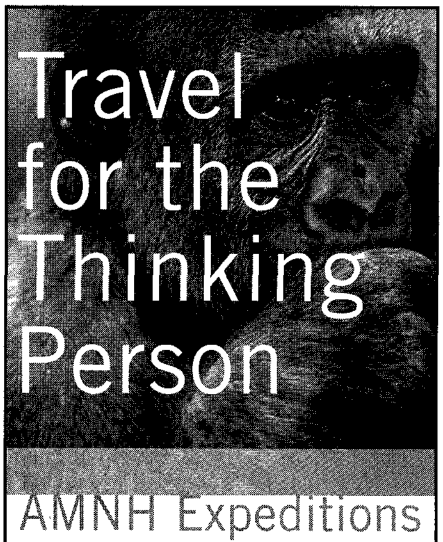
"Auto Mania" (Yale; $32.50), by Tom McCarthy, comes to the car of the future via the car of the past. McCarthy is a professor of history at the U.S. Naval Academy, and his book is based primarily on archival records kept at places like the Michigan Historical Center and the Automobile Club of Southern California. (McCarthy notes that, in the course of his research, he put nearly two hundred thousand miles on his car.) The book is structured around a series of decisions that were made by the auto industry between 1900—the year the first national automobile show was held, in New York—and the present day, and it makes the techno-optimism of "Zoom" seem almost dangerously naïve.

Typical of the tales that McCarthy tells is the story of leaded gasoline. The earliest automobiles were designed to run on ordinary—which is to say, unleaded—gas. But in the nineteen-tens, as automakers began to experiment with higher-compression engines, the problem of "knock" arose. (Knock, which can cause engine damage, occurs when the fuel in a cylinder ignites before the piston has reached the top of its cycle.) In 1921, a team of G.M. researchers looking for a way to prevent knock discovered that by adding small amounts of tetraethyl lead, or TEL, to the fuel supply they could solve the problem.

By that point, the toxicity of lead was already well known. Indeed, one of the G.M. researchers behind TEL, Thomas Midgley, very nearly poisoned himself while working on the additive, and several workers at a plant experimenting with TEL died gruesome deaths as a result of exposure to it. (Midgley went on to invent Freon, which was later discovered to be destroying the ozone layer.) In response to an outcry from public-health experts, G.M. and Standard Oil, which had formed a joint venture called the Ethyl Gasoline Corporation to manufacture leaded gas, launched a P.R. campaign. Among the arguments the companies made was that there simply were no alternatives to TEL, a claim that, according to McCarthy, there is reason to believe they knew to be false. (Already in the twenties, chemists proposed eliminating knock by increasing the octane level in gasoline, as was eventually done). The Surgeon General was concerned enough to appoint a commission to look into the matter. The commission punted, with the result that leaded gas, heavily promoted by the Ethyl Corporation, soon became the standard at American filling stations. It took the federal government until the mid-nineteen-seventies to order its phase-out. By that point, G.M. had sold its interest in Ethyl, and automakers in general had turned against TEL, not because it caused brain damage but because it interfered with the operation of catalytic converters, an innovation that car manufacturers had also long resisted. It is estimated that by 1996, when the sale of leaded gasoline for use in cars was finally banned in the U.S., seven million tons of lead had been released from automobiles' exhaust pipes into the air, and nearly seventy million American children had been exposed to what would now be considered dangerous blood-lead levels.

At the start of "Auto Mania," McCarthy writes that his is "not an angry book. We don't need another angry book about automobiles." In fact, as he acknowledges, many of the stories he recounts have already been told (and, arguably, told better) in earlier, more indignant works, like Jack Doyle's "Taken for a Ride" (2000) and Keith Bradsher's "High and Mighty" (2002). What distinguishes "Auto Mania" from these works, besides its tone, is the scope of its indictment. McCarthy doesn't blame Detroit for the ills of Detroit; he blames all of us.

McCarthy argues—convincingly if, once again, not terribly originally—that, to Americans, cars have never been just a means of transportation. Our choices about what to drive have always had a social component—keeping up with the Joneses—and an antisocial one: outdoing the Joneses. Both impulses have, of course, been fostered or, if you prefer, exploited by automakers, but, in the end, responsibility for our decisions is our own. In the early nineteen-eighties, Detroit introduced new versions of several S.U.V.s, including the Jeep Cherokee and the Chevy Blazer. The timing seemed perverse; as McCarthy notes, "Americans who had grown up listening to Ralph Nader crusading for safer automobiles, who knew that automobiles caused smog, and who lived through the energy crisis in the 1970s, certainly understood that larger, heavier vehicles burned more gasoline and posed a threat to smaller, lighter vehicles in collisions." Yet sales of the redesigned S.U.V.s were so brisk that even the automakers were surprised. The vehicles may have been dangerous, wasteful, and unnecessary, but what the hey, they were fun! "More smiles per gallon," promised an ad for the Suzuki Samurai, an S.U.V. that enjoyed wide popularity until reports suggested that it was prone to roll over.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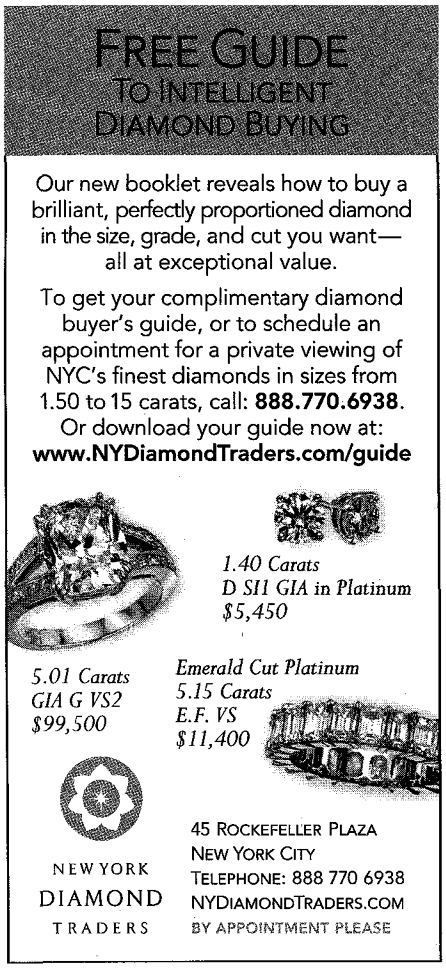
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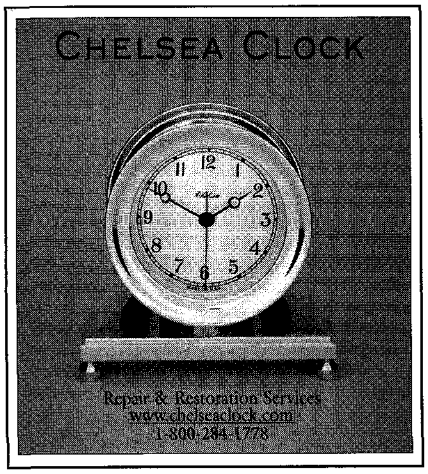
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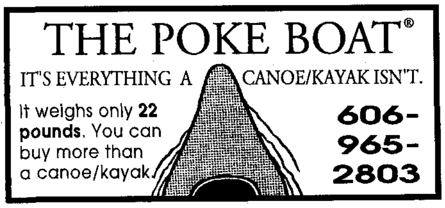
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Like Carson and Vaitheeswaran (and just about anyone else who has looked at the numbers), McCarthy views current trends in car-making, car buying, and car driving as deeply problematic. But he sees little reason to believe that challenges like global warming and declining oil reserves and rising demand in China and India will be dealt with any more expeditiously than leaded gasoline was. McCarthy takes up the Partnership for a New Generation of Vehicles only long enough to dismiss it as an evasive tactic. By his account, the Clinton Administration initiated the partnership to avoid the more effective, but politically riskier, step of raising fuel-efficiency standards. Ditto for the Bush Administration and the FreedomCAR program. Talking up the car of the future, McCarthy suggests, is just another way Detroit has found to insure that it never arrives. It's worth noting that the average new car sold in the U.S. today gets twenty miles to the gallon, which is virtually the same as it got in 1993, when the Partnership for a New Generation of Vehicles was launched, and—remarkably enough—less than Henry Ford's Model T got when it went on the market, ninety-nine years ago last month.

Detroit has to change. Detroit won't change. The two statements seem incompatible, and yet here we are. The Big Three still claim to be on the verge of introducing revolutionary new technologies—"Imagine: A daily commute without a drop of gas," a G.M. ad touting a battery-powered car (still in the concept stage) exhorts—even as they continue to fight higher fuel-efficiency standards, on the ground that meeting such standards would be technologically infeasible. Their selective incompetence brings to mind Masetto da Lamporecchio, from "The Decameron," who pretends to be a deaf-mute in order to screw the nuns.

It now seems clear—and both "Zoom" and "Auto Mania" present a compelling case on this point—that car design could be radically improved. Already the technology exists to more or less double fuel efficiency. (A great deal could be accomplished simply by trimming the weight of the average vehicle, which has increased by almost thirty per cent in the last two decades.) The failure of the Partnership for a New Generation of Vehicles notwithstanding, tripling fuel efficiency also seems feasible. Such gains would have a huge impact in terms of oil consumption—passenger vehicles in the U.S. now account for forty per cent of the country's oil use, and ten per cent of the world's—and greenhouse-gas production.

But improving gas mileage will take us only so far. Once the Chinese and the Indians really start driving, doubled or even tripled fuel efficiency won't suffice. This is why Carson and Vaitheeswaran regard the Prius merely as a stopgap: the true car of the future has to accommodate everyone, which is to say six and a half billion, soon to be nine billion, people.

Hard-core techno-optimists insist that this goal, too, could be met, if only automakers and politicians would apply themselves to the task that up to now they've taken such pains to avoid. This is a comforting argument; unfortunately, though, it assumes precisely what's at issue. After all, just because someone has never bothered to enter the New York City Marathon doesn't mean that if he runs in it he'll win.

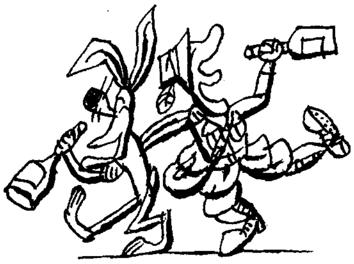
Ultimately, designing the car of the future is such a daunting challenge because it's bigger even than cars. As anyone who owns a BlackBerry or a cell phone or a flat-screen TV knows, technological change, when it comes, can come fantastically rapidly. But when we charge our video iPod nanos we are drawing power that, for the most part, is still generated as it was in Thomas Edison's day. It's true that hydrogen cars, which the Bush Administration and the Big Three claim to be working on, don't need gasoline—the "freedom" in FreedomCAR is supposed to represent "freedom from dependence on imported oil"—but they do need hydrogen, which has to be produced using energy from somewhere. If that energy comes from, say, burning coal, as nearly half the electricity generated in the U.S. does, then the puzzle hasn't been solved; it's just been rearranged. The same catch applies to plug-in cars and cars that run on ethanol. (Ethanol made from corn takes almost as much energy to produce as it yields.) If someone, somewhere, comes up with a source of power that is safe, inexpensive, and for all intents and purposes inexhaustible, then we, the Chinese, the Indians, and everyone else on the planet can keep on truckin'. Barring that, the car of the future may turn out to be no car at all. ♦

BRIEFLY NOTED

Neglected Classics

The Last Cavalier, *by Alexandre Dumas, translated from the French by Lauren Yoder (Pegasus; $32).* This long-lost novel by the nineteenth-century master of the swashbuckler was discovered in decidedly twentieth-century fashion, on microfilm in the National Library in Paris. A breathless seven hundred and fifty pages, the unfinished manuscript nominally concerns a young velvet-suited nobleman "whose pallor bespoke a strange destiny": to redeem his family's Royalist past, he must serve as a common sailor on a corsair. But Dumas seems only intermittently interested in his hero, lingering instead on Napoleon, still an emperor-in-waiting, bemoaning his marriage to spendthrift Josephine ("I shall keep divorce legal in France, if only so I can leave that woman"). Amid stagecoach heists, assassination attempts, and the occasional tiger hunt, sudden details gleam: a condemned aristocrat requests the services of a barber en route to the scaffold; a lovelorn girl conspires to commit suicide by snakebite.

Growth of the Soil, *by Knut Hamsun, translated from the Norwegian by Sverre Lyngstad (Penguin; $13).* When Hamsun won the Nobel Prize in Literature, in 1920, it was mostly because of this 1917 novel, an epic vision of peasant life in Norway's backcountry. The saga of Isak and Inger (born with a harelip) and their hard times is by turns affecting and ponderous; the somewhat overheated first-person narrators of Hamsun's extraordinary early novels—"Hunger" and "Pan"—are replaced by a stately, almost distant third person. Yet Hamsun's eye and ear were still sharp; even his trees have special qualities ("Everybody knows that aspens can have an unpleasant, bullying way of rustling"). In this overdue new version, Lyngstad, Hamsun's heroic translator, splendidly captures the author's voice as he guides his large cast into the stresses of the modern age.



Porius, *by John Cowper Powys (Overlook Duckworth; $37.95).* This immense, robustly imagined novel was whittled down by more than five hundred pages when it was first published, in 1951. Powys's original conception is here restored, a dense, complex merging of modern psychology and ancient mythology. In Wales in the year 499, the ruling Celts learn that the Saxons and the forest people are advancing against them; Porius, the son of the Celt prince, awaits the coming battle while ruminating on the eternal conflicts between male and female, nature and humankind, pagan and Christian. No mere philosopher, he also wields a corpse as a weapon and sleeps with a giantess. The line between reality and reverie is not always clearly demarcated, and the epic number of characters is often bewildering, but the astutely envisaged world and the operatic romantic couplings quickly draw in the reader.

The Amazon, *by Euclides da Cunha, translated from the Portuguese by Ronald Sousa (Oxford; $12.95).* Euclides, a civil engineer turned journalist, occupies a unique niche in Brazilian letters. These essays, written after a 1905 trip, though they deal with topics like the hydrology, climate, and haphazard settlement of the Amazon, and the impossible lives of the rubber-tappers, contain passages that read like the letters of a brilliant friend. Their intricate sentences are animated by a tragic lyricism befitting the author, who was destined to be killed by his wife's young lover soon after he wrote these essays. Even specks of the unconscious racism here, if impolitic, can have redeeming charm (as when Euclides says of the Tacunas, dwellers on the upper Purus River, that they are "born looking old"). These haunting études reveal a man who saw the Amazon as a place where violence and cruelty are as inevitable as the tropic sun.

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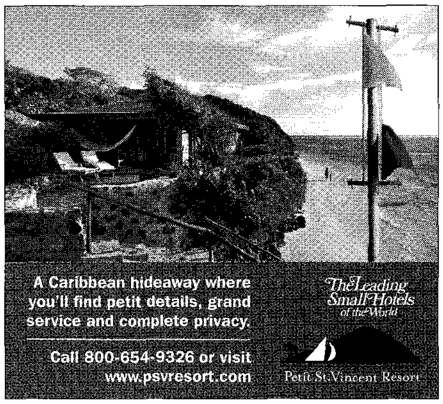

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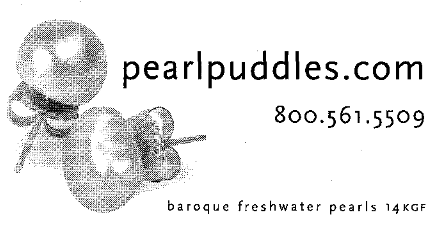

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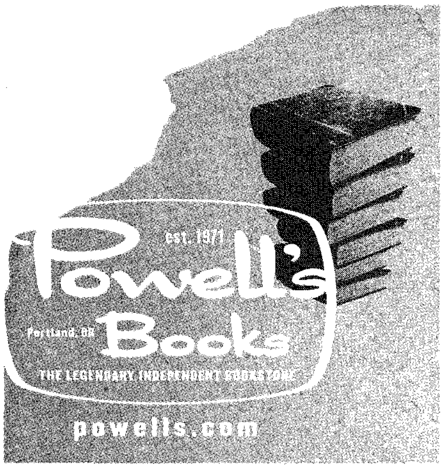

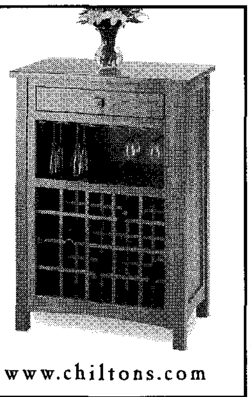
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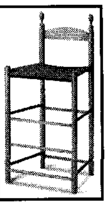
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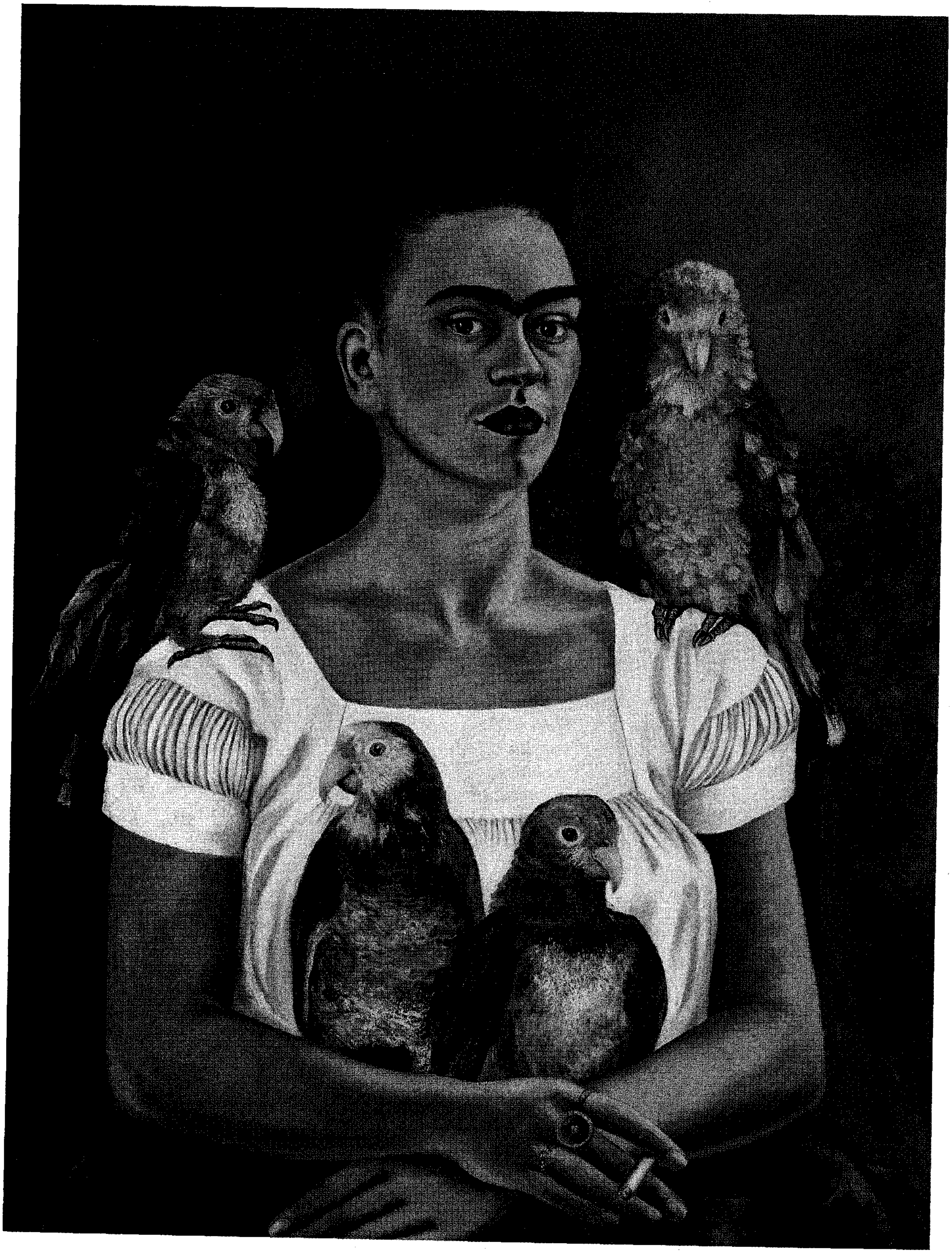
The Frida Kahlo cult.

BY PETER SCHJELDAHL

There are so many ways to be interested in Frida Kahlo, who was born a hundred years ago and died forty-seven years later, in 1954, that simply to look at and judge her paintings, as paintings, may seem narrow-minded. No one need appreciate art to justify being a Kahlo fan or even a Kahlo cultist. (Why not? The world will have cults, and who better merits one?) In Mexico, Kahlo's ubiquitous image has become the counter-Guadalupe, complementing the numinous Virgin as a deathless icon of Mexicanidad. Kahlo's ascension, since the late nineteen-seventies, to feminist sainthood is ineluctable, though a mite strained. (Kahlo struggled not in common cause with women but, single-handedly, for herself.) And her pansexual charisma, shadowed by tales of ghastly physical and emotional suffering, makes her an avatar of liberty and guts. However, Kahlo's eminence wobbles unless her work holds up. A retrospective at the Walker Art Center, in Minneapolis, proves that it does, and then some. She made some iffy symbological pictures and a few perfectly awful ones—forgivably, given their service to her always imperilled morale—but her self-portraits cannot be overpraised. They are sui generis in art while collegial with great portraiture of every age. Kahlo is among the winnowed elect of twentieth-century painters who will never be absent for long from the mental museums of future artists.

She was born Magdalena Carmen Frida Kahlo y Calderón in the house where she would die, in Coyoacán, then a prosperous suburb and later a district of Mexico City. She was the third child of a Hungarian-German immigrant photographer, who was an atheist Jew, and a pious mestiza from Oaxaca. Polio, at age six, withered her right leg and foot. She was among the rare girls admitted to the sterling National Preparatory School, in Mexico City, where she grew from an effervescent tomboy into a brilliant young woman, during the creative tumult of the nineteen-twenties. When she was eighteen, a bus crash left her with spinal and pelvic damage that would entail many surgeries, some of them probably unnecessary. (Was she masochistic? Anyone doomed to a lifetime of pain will find veins of sweetness in it.) While convalescing, she began to paint, depicting herself, in styles influenced by Renaissance and Mannerist masters, with the aid of a mirror set in the canopy of her bed. In 1928, she took up with Mexico's chief artist, Diego Rivera, who was twenty years her senior. They married in 1929, divorced for a year in 1939, then remarried. They were the loves of each others' lives, though with innumerable supplements. Their semi-public affairs (her amours included Leon Trotsky and numerous women); their dealings with famous figures in America and Europe, from John D. Rockefeller to Pablo Picasso; and their political adventures, as Communists subject to sectarian pushes and pulls, make Hayden Herrera's hugely consequential biography, "Frida" (1983), a delirious read. (Herrera is a co-curator, with Elizabeth Carpenter, of the Walker show.) Kahlo died, probably of a complication of pneumonia, the last in a cascade of deteriorative maladies, a year after the opening of her first solo exhibition in Mexico.

Rivera often remarked, correctly, that Kahlo was a better painter than he was. Picasso confessed himself incapable "of painting a head like those of Frida Kahlo." André Breton praised her art—with enthusiasm marked by condescension—as "a ribbon around a bomb." In point of fact, the ribbons and other feminine adornments that she renders are, themselves, rhetorically explosive. Breton also claimed her as an exemplar of international Surrealism. Wrong again. At her best, she is a better artist than any of the Surrealists except Salvador Dali at his best, unless early Giorgio de Chirico may be deemed Surrealist before the letter.



Kahlo's "Me and My Parrots" (1941). Her self-portraits are about her gaze, as subject matter, technique, and content.

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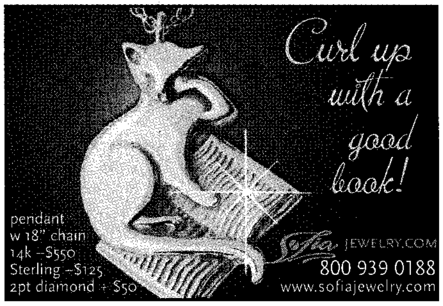

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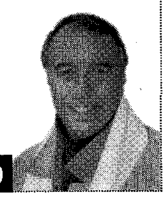

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Besides, the avant-garde most germane to Kahlo's development in the twenties is that of German Neue Sachlichkeit (New Objectivity), which mined heightened realism for psychological drama. To this, she added fecund inspirations from Mexican pre-Columbian and folk art and Spanish-colonial and Creole portraiture. No swoons into the supposed unconscious—even most of her dream pictures are wide awake. She was terrific at still-lifes of fruit and flowers and at picturing animals—she intermittently maintained a menagerie of dogs, cats, parrots, and monkeys—all of which channel her consciousness. Kahlo's self-portraits are about her gaze, as subject matter, technique, and content. They dramatize sheer attentiveness. They tell us exactly what it's like to be Frida Kahlo, with, I believe, a superbly indifferent confidence that we will not understand. She confides, but she won't plead. She makes eye contact not with the viewer but with herself—watching herself watch herself, in an extended but closed loop. T. S. Eliot articulated the truth, regarding all successful art, of a dissociation of "the man who suffers and the mind which creates." Make the man a woman, and Kahlo becomes singular for having engaged both parties at once—and only them. Looking at the pictures, you're not there.

The meaning of Kahlo's art comes across in reproductions, but not its full dynamic, which involves brooding subtleties of surface and color. The reproduced images are shiny and bright. The paintings are matte and grayish, drinking and withholding light. (Their display calls for intense illumination—that of the Mexican sun, say. They should not be hung on white walls, as they are at the Walker, where the contrast makes them look like holes in a snowbank.) The lovely, highly varied, blushing colors (even Kahlo's browns and greens blush) don't radiate. Fused with represented flesh, foliage, fabrics, and, yes, ribbons and jewelry, they turn their backs to us. The payoff of this reticence is an absorption in the artist's touch. It's easy to fantasize that Kahlo's brushes were fingertips, able to mold her own more than familiar features in the dark. The tactility of certain self-portraits is, among other things, staggeringly sexy. In "Me and My Parrots" (1941), it combines with sharp tonal contrasts of warm color to convey invisible moistness, as of a summertime, full-body, delicate sweat. Elsewhere, the felt oneness of sight and touch stirs harrowing empathy, as in "The Broken Column" (1944). Kahlo's nude body is split open to reveal a crumbling pillar, nails penetrating her flesh everywhere. Tears flow from her eyes, but her face is dispassionate, as always. Her pain is not her. It just won't let her mind stray to anything else, for the moment. The work belongs to a category of images with which Kahlo confronted and endured episodes of agony, including heartbreak and rage. (Most piercing are laments of her disastrous pregnancies; she longed for children but physically could not bring a baby to term.) They aren't great art, but they are moving testaments of a great artist.

Blisteringly scornful of self-importance—in a letter from Paris, in English, she lauded Marcel Duchamp as "the only one who has his feet on the earth, among all this bunch of coocoo lunatic sons of bitches of the surrealists"—Kahlo would surely raise her prodigious eyebrow to behold what has been made of her. But immortal fame rarely meshes with the temperament of those it befalls. It is about the wishes of others. In Kahlo's case, the ways that she has been used by feminists, multiculturalists, bisexualists, and whatnot are readily defensible. Each catches the glint from one of her facets. Most of all, Kahlo is authentically a national treasure of Mexico, a country that her work expresses not merely as a culture but as a complete civilization, with profound roots in several pasts and with proper styles of modernity. She didn't accomplish this by trying to, as Rivera did. She simply did it. For confirmation, visit her house, the Casa Azul, in Coyoacán, whose contents and décor are as vibrant with her presence as if she had just stepped outside. I should disclose that I'm nearly a Kahlo cultist, myself. Much that is hurt and disappointed in me feels momentarily allayed, and almost healed, when I am in the spell of her art. Like the serene Madonnas of Giovanni Bellini, with their hints of the coming Crucifixion, her self-portraits assure me of two things: first, that things are worse than I know, and, second, that they're all right. ♦

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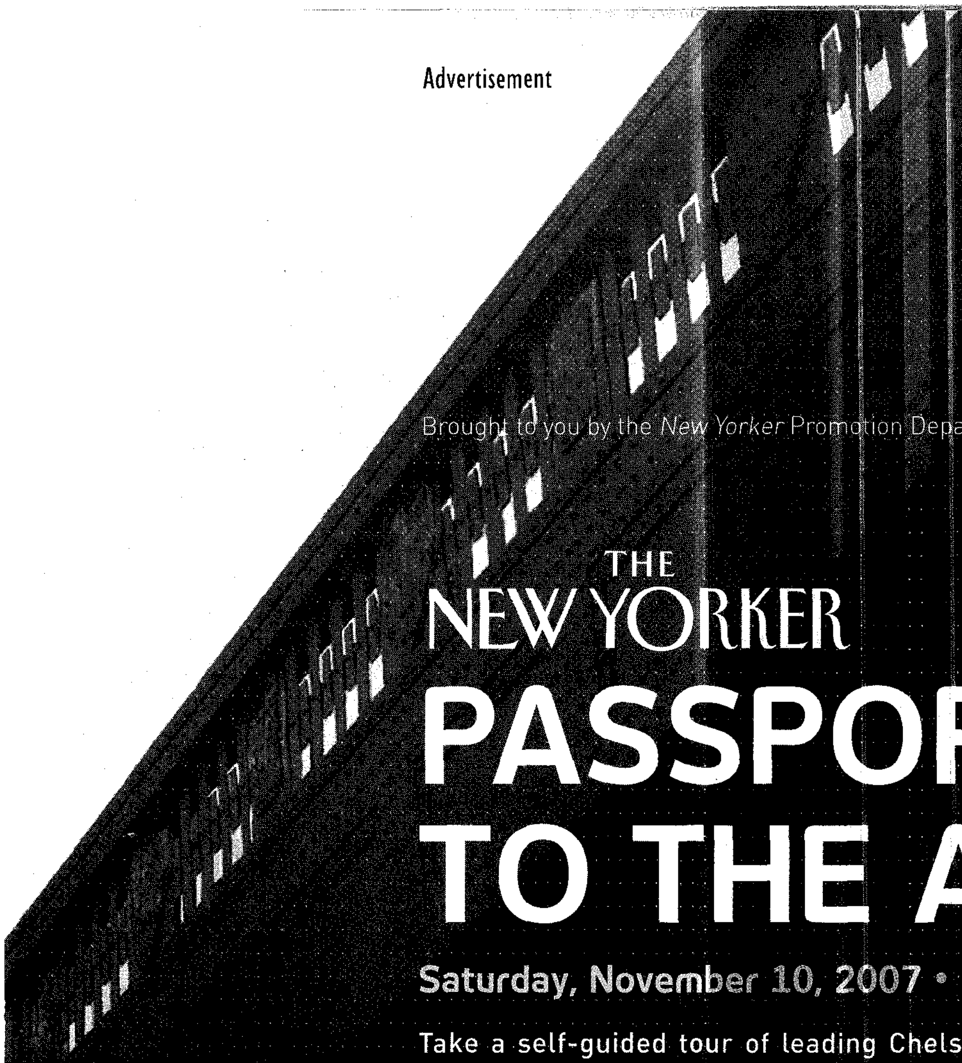

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DANCING

THE NEWCOMER

Christopher Wheeldon at City Center.

BY JOAN ACOCELLA

Christopher Wheeldon's new ballet troupe, Morphoses, had a week-long New York début season at City Center last month, and before each performance Wheeldon came out in front of the curtain to thank the companies that had lent him his dancers: London's Royal Ballet (which had dispatched its brilliant star Alina Cojocaru), the Bolshoi (Anastasia Yatsenko), New York City Ballet (Wendy Whelan, Maria Kowroski, Ashley Bouder), and others. This was a gracious thank-you, and more than that. By informing the spectators that they were about to see a highly credentialled group of dancers, it provided a rousing warmup. It also showed us the boss, in a salable manner. Wheeldon is appealing to start with: fresh-faced, boyish. Here he appeared in street clothes, with his hair mussed; he looked as though he had just come out of rehearsal. This was a guy you could like.

Right now, he needs to be liked. Trained at the Royal Ballet's school, he danced with that company for two years. In 1993, he moved to New York and joined N.Y.C.B. He was a lovely performer, well trained and eager—he danced so hard that he got red in the face—but he didn't last long on the stage, because he wanted to choreograph. In 2000, at the age of twenty-seven, he quit dancing and soon became N.Y.C.B.'s resident choreographer. Then, last year, he announced that he would be leaving to form his own ballet company. This news set off much gasping in the press. The *Times* speculated that he might be redirecting funds normally given to N.Y.C.B. and American Ballet Theatre. A recent article on him in *New York* was titled "Revolution in Tights" and bannered the words "WITH THE LAUNCH OF NEW YORK'S FIRST MAJOR COMPANY IN 50 YEARS, CHRISTOPHER WHEELDON IS UPENDING THE BALLET ESTABLISHMENT." Actually, it hasn't been fifty years—the Eliot Feld Ballet was founded in 1974—and I don't know that Wheeldon is plotting revolution. He's just trying to start a small ballet troupe. (He has said that it will be a pickup company—that is, with dancers hired only on a season-to-season basis—for two years. Then, once he has raised about five million dollars, it will become a permanent company, with twenty dancers engaged year-round.) In a way, though, the press was right to exclaim over this event. Things are tough in the ballet world nowadays. There are many marvellous dancers but there's very little memorable new choreography. In the past twenty years, only one ballet choreographer has emerged whose work has set off widespread, international excitement: Christopher Wheeldon. So for him to start a company really was a big deal.

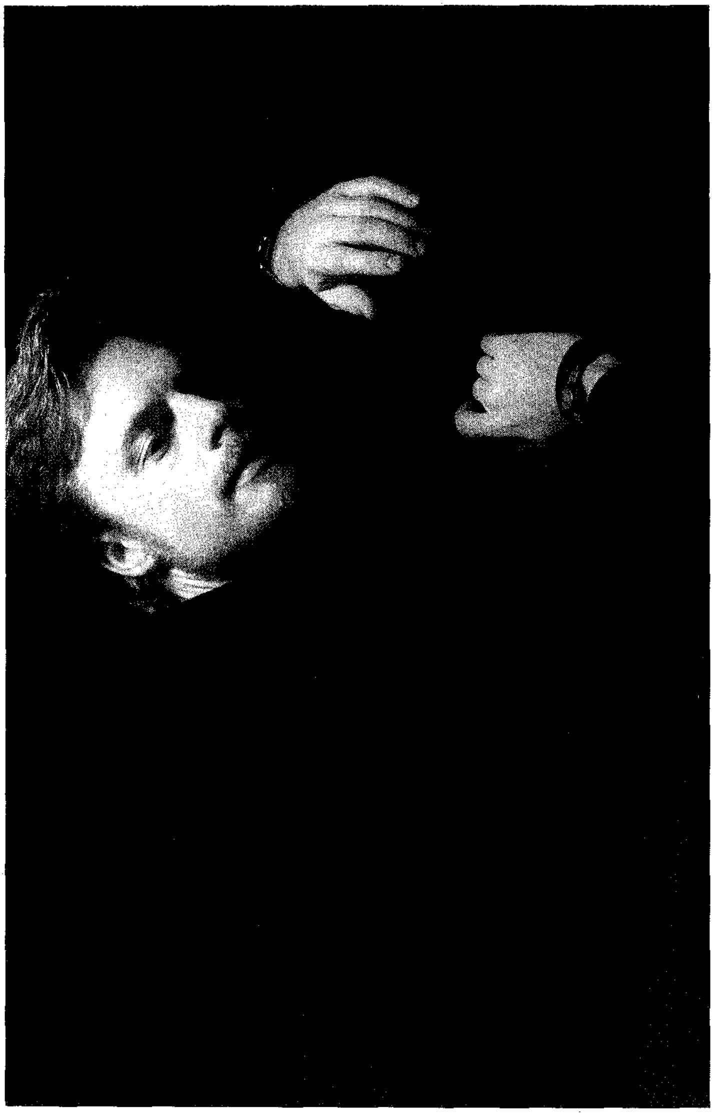
Also, he announced ambitious plans. He wouldn't be the only one making dances for Morphoses. He wanted the company to be a laboratory, where many choreographers could come and work, together with composers, set designers, and costume designers. They would produce *Gesamtkunstwerk*, "total art," like Diaghilev's Ballets Russes. Finally, he hoped to lure in a new audience, closer to his own age (thirty-four). Hence the curtain speech: the chinos, the messy hair, the no-note-cards delivery. He seemed to be saying to anyone under forty in the audience, "I'm not like those other ballet directors, old men in suits. I'm young and cool, like you."

In other ways, too, he tried to make the audience comfortable. As each dance opened, its title was projected on a scrim in front of the stage. When the lights go down at a ballet performance, you often hear people asking each other frantically, "What's the next piece?" They spent intermission socializing and forgot to look at their programs. Wheeldon knows this, and is helping them out. In the evening's central section, a series of short dances, he made matters easier still by introducing each piece with a short film, maybe a minute long, of the cast rehearsing that number. The films (by William Trevitt and Michael Nunn, a.k.a. London's Ballet Boyz, who also danced during the season) were very good: sexy, sweaty. But their purpose, I believe, was to give the audience a toehold on the ballet before the curtain went up, and also to give them the pleasure, as they watched the piece, of recognizing steps. ("Oh, that's the passage they were working on in the film.") No art, not even opera, is more clad in snobbery than ballet. These little movies were an attack on that, and God bless them.

Having bent over backward for the audience in those ways, however, Wheeldon made no further concessions. At City Ballet—and at the many other companies that have commissioned ballets from him—he was hailed as both up-to-date and traditional. His music was often modern, his choreography free and ungenteel, with plenty of splay-legged moves for the women. But he still gave the audience things that they were used to, and that they liked: ballet steps, stories. This season was different. The work looked more like what, in America, we call "European ballet," which is not necessarily a term of praise. What it means is that the ballet steps are elided—often smeared—into a long-phrased action that favors rush and climax over clarity. European ballet also tends to go in for high-wire partnering, and so did Wheeldon this season. Not even at the Bolshoi, which is where the Europeans learned that sort of partnering, have I seen maneuvers such as Wheeldon's dancers are now doing, with the women being twirled like batons and maybe landing upside down on the man's back, or sitting in his hands. Some of this was impressive—for example, in the new "Prokofiev Pas de Deux," a love duet that, however complicated, seemed to unroll in one long ribbon. (The piece was thrillingly performed by Alina Cojocaru and Nehemiah Kish.) But elsewhere a lot of the partnering was what you might call investigative—that is, "Can this be *done*?" It could, but the result was often more a picture than a movement, and movement is ballet's medium.

Much of the work also seemed to be

about little more than those striking pictures. A ballet, to have a story, doesn't need to show us somebody falling in love or getting killed. The story may be just a tone, or a kind of encounter between people. Of the two new Wheeldon pieces this season (there were also five old pieces by him, together with ballets by Edwaard Liang, William Forsythe, Liv Lorent, and Michael Clarke), only the "Prokofiev Pas de Deux" had a story. As for the other new piece, "Fools' Paradise"—which had a cast of nine and gold specks raining down from the flies—I would like to have been able to figure out what it was other than a gorgeous configuration of well-toned bodies. I also missed seeing Wheeldon's skill with ensembles—his genius for placing large groups on the stage, driving them this way and that, creating a whole Trojan War of massed energies. Only one piece, the adorable "Dance of the Hours" that Wheeldon made for the Metropolitan Opera's "La Gioconda" last year, had a corps. Obviously, the small cast in the other pieces was a budgetary decision. In compensation, another budgetary decision—a hugely expensive one—was that every piece would have live music. As usual, this basically doubled the power of the shows.


Wheeldon's troupe makes its début. Photograph by Elinor Carucci.

What, apart from some nice dances to uncanned music, did the season have to justify the hype in the advance press? Two great and unfakable virtues. First, a decent spirit. Art is personal; it makes people think about their secret lives. Balanchine was always cherished for creating ballets with good values. Wheeldon has often been likened to Balanchine—too often. In this regard, however, the comparison is apt. He lacks the coldness so widespread in contemporary ballet. Even in the one piece of his that was about faithlessness, "There Where She Loved" (to songs by Chopin and Kurt Weill), some of the couples were happy, and, when they weren't, nobody really ended badly. The people in Wheeldon's ballets acknowledge each other, mean something to each other. Again and again, a man will run his hands down a woman's arms, from neck to wrist. He knows her. This note of intimacy is always there in Wheeldon's work.

Another matter: Wheeldon casts a spell on dancers. He makes them more courageous, more spontaneous, more interesting than they were before. He demonstrated this long ago, in the ballets he made for Wendy Whelan at N.Y.C.B. Formerly a rather dry dancer, she became, in his hands, a tragic heroine. This was a poignant spectacle, and proof of how much it means, to dancers, to have serious work made on them. Whelan was there onstage at City Center, looking relaxed and masterful. She is Wheeldon's hundred-dollar bill.

What he once did with Whelan he did this season with many of his performers. Craig Hall, Teresa Reichlen: they have been good dancers at N.Y.C.B., but who knew that they were personalities? Then there is Maria Kowroski. This tall, long-legged, fabulous-looking woman joined N.Y.C.B. in 1995 and was soon recognized as something close to Ballerina Incarnate. She was therefore cast in the goddess roles, the Suzanne Farrell roles. But as one followed her from season to season there seemed to be a blank that she couldn't fill in. She was the platonic form, all right, but not the earthly enactment. I thought maybe she wasn't too bright. But in Wheeldon's season she was utterly different, even physically. She seemed to wear no makeup—for the first time, we saw her real face—and she had no tights on. Those legs of hers, legendary before, became better than legendary: fleshly and touching. Her big moment came in the duet "Je Ne T'Aime Pas," which concluded "There Where She Loved." In this piece, she was cast against type, as a spurned lover, and she played the role with wonderful richness and nuance. Imagining Kowroski getting dumped by anyone is not easy, but there it was, and you went through the whole experience with her. What did Wheeldon say to her to elicit this performance? I don't know—maybe "Here's this little thing you might try, different from what you usually do." And thus a dancer becomes an artist.

After the big buildup, Wheeldon of course got some frosty reviews. It was said that his programs were unvaried, that the dances were too much alike. It was noted that he unveiled no masterpieces. All that is true, and now that we've had the thesis and antithesis, Morphoses can begin its regular existence. I'm eager to see what that will be. ♦

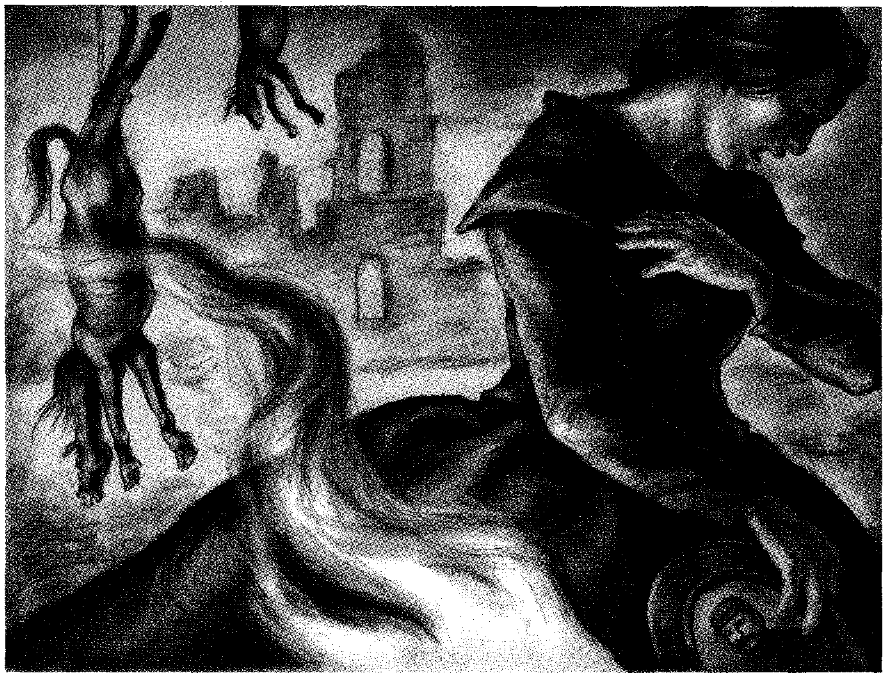
MUSICAL EVENTS

THE ENDLESS SCROLL

New works by Philip Glass.

BY ALEX ROSS

Philip Glass is without a doubt America's most famous living composer of classical music. In fact, he may be America's *only* famous living composer of classical music—the single one who would draw nods of recognition (or irritation) if you were to start waving eight-by-ten glossies of modern-music masters at passersby in Times Square. His Hollywood film scores, his collaborations with pop stars such as David Bowie and Linda Ronstadt, his ubiquity as a purveyor of motorized musical melancholy, all have placed him at an altitude of celebrity that eludes even the loftiest of his colleagues—Steve Reich, John Adams, Elliott Carter, and the rest.



In the opera "Appomattox," festive orchestral touches ironically undercut grim imagery.

OWEN SMITH

Yet Glass's seventieth birthday, which fell on January 31st of this year, failed to create much hullabaloo in the ordinarily anniversary-addicted classical world. Last year, when Reich turned seventy, Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, and BAM joined forces to present a month of celebratory concerts. Glass, on the other hand, has been more or less overlooked at New York's culture palaces. The obvious explanation is that his intellectual reputation is not nearly as secure as that of Reich, his old Juilliard classmate and minimalist comrade. New-music mavens bestow varying degrees of respect and awe on Glass's major achievements of the nineteen-seventies—the evening-length instrumental cycle "Music in Twelve Parts," the mind-bending music-theatre event "Einstein on the Beach"—but they're apt to dismiss his post-1980 output, even if few can claim to have heard all of the fifty or so works that have cropped up in the present decade alone.

Quantity is the problem: Glass writes faster than most of us can listen. In this respect, he resembles two earlier twentieth-century figures, Paul Hindemith and Darius Milhaud, both of whom shifted in middle age from a brazenly youthful style to a mature, workmanlike one, generating hundreds of semi-interchangeable works. Hindemith was often linked to the concept of "music for use": if asked to write a piece for three bassoons and ukulele, he would comply, not worrying about the approval of the invisible judges of posterity. In the face of such Stakhanovite productivity, the listener is tempted to throw up his hands in frustration and dismiss the entire catalogue as so much musical scribbling. But it's worth taking the trouble to discover first-rate pieces amid the reams of pretty good ones. Certainly, no one can deny that Glass possesses an instantly recognizable signature sound; the question now is whether that signature is being produced by automatic pen.

Controversy surrounds Glass's music, but there is little disagreement over Glass the man. In the cash-strapped, attention-deprived world of contemporary music, he is prized for his generosity and humility. Last month, the Paula Cooper gallery hosted a gala for the MATA Festival, a young composers' series that Glass co-founded ten years ago. At one point, the composer Lisa Bielawa praised Glass's "quiet," "silent," and "private" support for younger composers of many different stylistic persuasions, even those who resist his influence. Glass stared at the floor while Bielawa talked. After the concert, he shook a few hands and walked alone into the Chelsea night, no doubt planning next week's oratorio.

Two big new Glass works had their premières this year: the two-act opera "Appomattox," which was recently given its first performance at the San Francisco Opera, and "Book of Longing," a hundred-minute song cycle based on texts by Leonard Cohen, which played first in Toronto and came to the Lincoln Center Festival in July. Around the same time, Glimmerglass Opera presented an elegant revival of Glass's 1993 opera "Orphée," an ingenious adaptation of the script of Jean Cocteau's film of the same name. Glass won't be neglected in New York over the long term: in the spring, the Metropolitan Opera will present a revival of the 1980 opera "Satyagraha," and Gerard Mortier, the incoming director of New York City Opera, has promised a long-overdue revival of "Einstein on the Beach." Meanwhile, recordings of Glass music seem to arrive about once every two weeks from

Orange Mountain Music, the composer's own label.

To encounter a new Glass work these days is to pass through a familiar sequence of emotions. More often than not, you start with a disappointed sense of déjà vu: a rapid onset of churning arpeggios and chugging minor-key progressions dashes any hope that the composer may have struck off in a startling new direction. At times, it seems as though he had launched Microsoft Arpeggio on a computer and gone off to have tea with, say, Richard Gere. But marvellous things can happen when the composer's attention is fully engaged. In the Cohen cycle, the expected stretches of prefab Glass periodically give way to sharply characterized solos for cello, oboe, violin, saxophone, and double-bass. These set the stage for a potent reimagining of Cohen's song "You Came to Me This Morning"—it becomes a languid ballad somewhat reminiscent of the Kurt Weill of "Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny," driven along by an ominously seething ensemble accompaniment. In the right context, Glass's music releases unexpected energies: those dark broken chords can unscroll like the writing on the wall.

"Appomattox," a dramatization of the last days of the Civil War, with a libretto by the British playwright Christopher Hampton, starts with fifteen solid minutes of déjà vu. Conversations among the familiar principals—Lincoln and Grant, Robert E. Lee and his wife—are rendered in sometimes awkward vocal lines; there's a creaky documentary feel. Later in the act, the opera comes alive. The burning of Richmond, the Confederate capital, is conveyed in a nightmarish sequence that has some of the barrelling energy of the opening movement of Shostakovich's "Leningrad" Symphony; festive touches in the orchestra, from glittering percussion to booming tuba, ironically undercut the grim imagery onstage. The figure of Lee takes on tragic dimensions; he is superbly portrayed by the baritone Dwayne Croft as a man fighting with all his heart for a cause in which he does not fully believe. In Act II, Hampton's artful libretto begins leaping forward in time: to the rollback of civil rights during Reconstruction, to the brutal confrontations of the nineteen-fifties and sixties, and, finally, to the confused racial landscape of the present day. Close to the end, the stage is given over to Edgar Ray Killen, a former Klansman who was belatedly convicted, two years ago, of participating in the murder of civil-rights workers in Philadelphia, Mississippi, in 1964. Sung with snarling intensity by the bass-baritone Philip Skinner, Killen delivers a taut, high-flying aria of unrepentant hatred, ending with the question "Am I right?" Despite its flaws, "Appomattox" makes its points with blunt moral force, next to which most contemporary American operas seem timid.

The most consistently inspired of recent Glass pieces is the Eighth Symphony, which had its première in 2005, and which Orange Mountain Music has recorded with Dennis Russell Davies and the Bruckner Orchestra Linz. Against all odds, this work succeeds in adding something certifiably new to the overstuffed annals of the classical symphony. There are three sections: a twenty-minute movement in moderate tempo, a twelve-minute passacaglia slow movement, and a final movement that is slightly slower than the second and about half as long. The musical material is cut from familiar fabric, but it's striking that the composer forgoes the expected bustling conclusion and instead delves into a mood of deepening twilight and unending night. The first time I heard the CD, I found myself staring into space for several long minutes, surprised by the enveloping sadness of the symphony's ending. And surprise is what has been missing from much post-"Einstein" Glass.

Has Glass entered the late-period renaissance that his admirers have long awaited? Maybe so, although no one should discount all that other work in his catalogue, even those middling pieces which seem to fade away immediately after they have been heard. Glass is really a composer in the spirit of the Baroque, producing music on demand, tailoring each piece to the occasion. He is the determined antithesis of the Romantic artist, the one who writes in suffering secret for a posthumous public. This is perhaps the most significant message that Glass delivers to the young composers whom he assists behind the scenes: stop dreaming of Beethoven and get your music played. ♦

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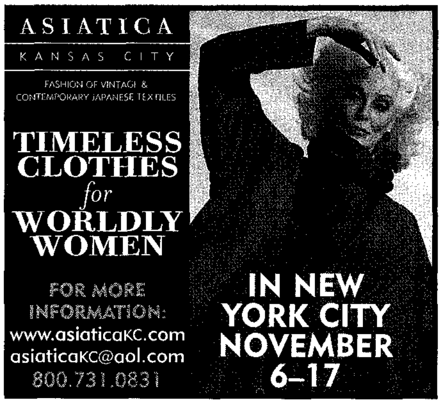
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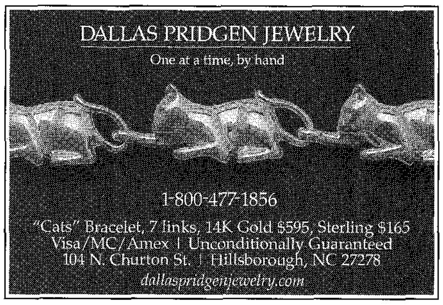
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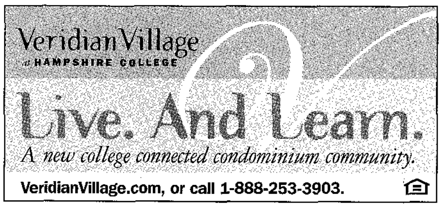
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THE THEATRE

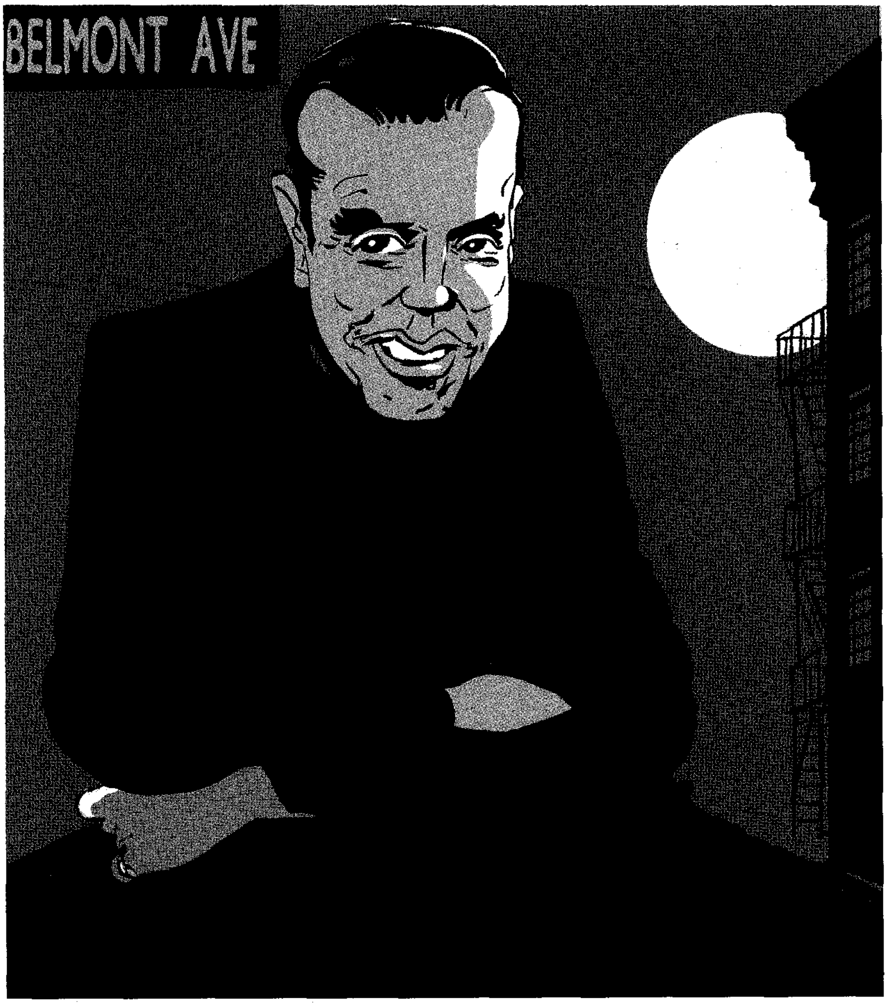
FLASHBACKS

The Bronx in the sixties and Rwanda in the nineties.

BY HILTON ALS

During the seventies and early eighties, American movie audiences were treated to a proliferation of Italian-American stars. In Martin Scorsese's "Mean Streets" (1973), the first two parts of Francis Ford Coppola's "The Godfather" (1972, 1974), and Sidney Lumet's "Serpico" (1973)—films that drew a dark curtain over America's perennial optimism—the ethnic white male, as portrayed by Robert De Niro, Al Pacino, and others, suddenly became an acceptable hero. By the time De Niro delivered a startling portrait of his character's dispossession in Scorsese's "Raging Bull" (1980), the cheesy savoir-faire of the Wasp matinée idol of the thirties and forties had been entirely left behind.

Freaked-out times deserve freaked-out stars. The late, great Italian-American character actor John Cazale taught us something about marginalization with his intense introspection and physical awkwardness; Cazale married a Brando-influenced naturalism to a nearly mute, neurotic poeticism that was all his own. If we look back even farther, we can see that the Italian-American star in all his florid glory wouldn't even have existed had American audiences not first taken an interest in his Jewish counterpart. In "Body and Soul" and "Gentleman's Agreement" (both 1947), the first-generation American Jewish actor John Garfield captured a certain jittery post-war angst; no girl, it seemed, could kiss his anxiety away.



Chazz Palminteri plays himself and others in a revival of "A Bronx Tale."

ISTVAN BANYAI

While some producers these days seem to prefer their ethnicity served up with jokes, the actor Chazz Palminteri (born Calogero Lorenzo Palminteri) has in the past done "ethnic" in a way that doesn't debase his Italian-American heritage. As Cheech, a gangster with the unsparing heart of a dramaturge, in Woody Allen's 1994 film "Bullets Over Broadway," Palminteri—who was nominated for an Oscar for the role—was, by turns, menacing, funny, and intelligent. He was just the kind of thug you'd like to have in your book group. He not only cut through all the intellectual pretensions that got on his nerves; he liked and understood what words could do.

With his hooded eyes, receding hairline, and long, expressive fingers, Palminteri has always had his own brand of sex appeal—one that is less frenetic than Pacino's, and deeper than De Niro's. In a way, the only thing that has kept him from being a star of their magnitude is his lack of idiosyncrasy. No matter what role Palminteri plays, you never get the sense that he is anything less than solid. He's no showoff. He wants to tell the story he needs to tell, and then get on with the day's work.

Palminteri began performing his one-man show, "A Bronx Tale" (now in revival at the Walter Kerr), Off Broadway in 1989. In this semi-autobiographical play about Italian-American life in a Bronx neighborhood in the nineteen-sixties, Palminteri takes on eighteen roles, including those of his younger self, his father, and a neighborhood gangster. This kind of approach—a script that doesn't require the star to interact with or play against other performers—offers a curious kind of freedom. But that freedom can be lethal for an actor who doesn't have a terrific range or a brutally honest director. Sadly, for this performance, Palminteri has neither. As helmed by the veteran director Jerry Zaks, who has won four Tonys (and who directed some twenty episodes of the hit television sitcom "Everybody Loves Raymond"), "A

Bronx Tale" is ultimately sunk by its weakest element: its sentimentality.

Here the young Palminteri is torn between being loyal to his father's views—respect your neighbors, don't hang with hoodlums or date black girls—and finding his own footing in life. All fluttery gestures and rapid breathing, he confronts the new world he longs to join. (And, of course, he eventually falls for a black woman.) When playing his younger self, Palminteri projects a kind of befuddled innocence. But it is "innocence" in quotation marks—it feels pasted on rather than lived. Oddly, the actor doesn't seem real in any of the parts that he has written for himself. And that's because the characters he tries to tell us about—young men, mostly, living and loving according to the rules of their Italian-American fraternity—are not real people but caricatures of the kind of provolone-devouring Italian boys Palminteri must have idolized when he was growing up. Palminteri certainly has a great deal of energy—that's part of his charm and his sexiness—but the show does little more than take us on a superficial tour of the Italian-American signposts that "The Godfather," "GoodFellas," and "The Sopranos" have already embedded in our culture. Like Tony Soprano, the young Palminteri digs doo-wop music and knows his way around a good pasta sauce. (The 1993 film version of "A Bronx Tale"—De Niro's directorial début—was far less broad and corny.)

There's another problem with "A Bronx Tale," and that's Palminteri's physicality. Before reprising this work, he would have done well to watch a few tapes of Richard Pryor or Lily Tomlin performing their one-person shows. Palminteri lacks the psychological and physical flexibility of those master monologuists. Although he is thin like them, he can't make himself credibly androgynous—as one must do to play men and women alike. In recent years, other performers, such as Nilaja Sun, in her one-woman show "No Child . . ." (2006), have taught us just how much spiritual work goes into storytelling and into making characters real, not just sociologically but emotionally. Palminteri is not a lazy actor, but he is a misguided one. He means to please, and he imagines that the Italian-tough-boy shtick is what the audience wants from "A Bronx Tale." He's a better actor than this. Perhaps having other performers onstage would have drawn out a little more of his authenticity and heart.

I loved everything about the young American playwright J. T. Rogers's "The Overwhelming" (a Roundabout Theatre Company production at the Laura Pels, under the direction of Max Stafford-Clark). I loved how messy the play's structure is, and Rogers's great ambition as a writer. "The Overwhelming," which had its début at London's National Theatre last year, is like a combination of Wallace Shawn's dissection, in his 1991 monologue "The Fever," of the political elements that are endemic to the tourist's way of seeing things and the poet Derek Walcott's examination of the poverty-stricken island-locked native in his 1990 epic "Omeros." In each work, the Third World is seen in the harsh glare of a bare light bulb—the author's intelligence. Neither Shawn nor Walcott allowed us to fall back on the Westerner's dreamy rhetoric about the beach and happy natives, and Rogers doesn't, either. Instead, he explores a kind of anthropology of the self, making a narrative out of his own disenfranchisement.

"The Overwhelming" is set in Rwanda in 1994. A white American academic named Jack Exley (the excellent Sam Robards) has arrived in the town of Kigali with his black American wife, Linda (Linda Powell), and his moody son from his first marriage, Geoffrey (the exceptional Michael Stahl-David). Jack intends to write a book about a friend who has gone missing there. It is the eve of the Rwandan genocide; soon, hundreds of thousands of Tutsi bodies will litter the roads, as America keeps its distance. In a sense, Jack, too, is able to keep his distance: he's white. And Linda passes, thanks to his presence. While Geoffrey connects with a local worker through Michael Jackson songs, we head farther and farther into the country's interior, and into the hierarchy of class between Rwandan blacks, which will, in short order, precipitate the country's hideous tragedy. One day in the market, Linda meets a young woman selling cabbages. She is warned by a male bystander not to buy the woman's wares: the woman is a Tutsi whore, the man says, whose food is likely poisoned. The man's glee as he asserts this is sickening—and it should be. Man's cruelty to man knows no bounds, and the lesson that Jack and his family learn at the heart of Rwanda's darkness is how awful life can be for all of those who know power only through hatred. ♦

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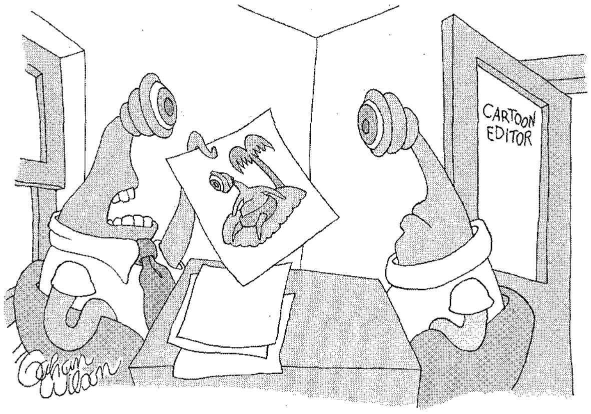
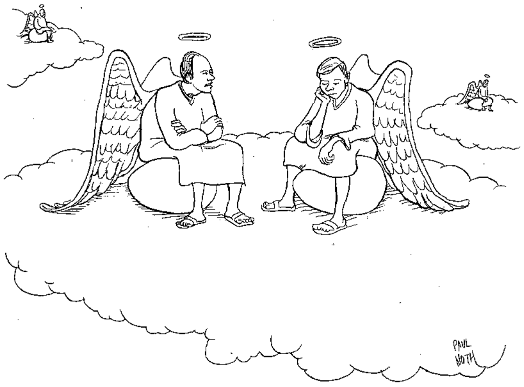
CARTOON CAPTION CONTEST

Each week, we provide a cartoon in need of a caption. You, the reader, submit a caption, we choose three finalists, and you vote for your favorite. Caption submissions for this week's cartoon, by Tom Cheney, must be received by Sunday, November 4th. Finalists in the October 22nd contest appear below; go online to vote. We will announce the winner, along with the finalists in this week's contest, in the November 19th issue. The winner will be given a signed print of the cartoon. Any U.S. resident age eighteen or over can enter or vote. To do so, and to read the complete rules, visit www.newyorker.com/captioncontest.

THE WINNING CAPTION



"On what planet do you imagine this would be funny?"
Eva Liane Foster, Princeton, N.J.



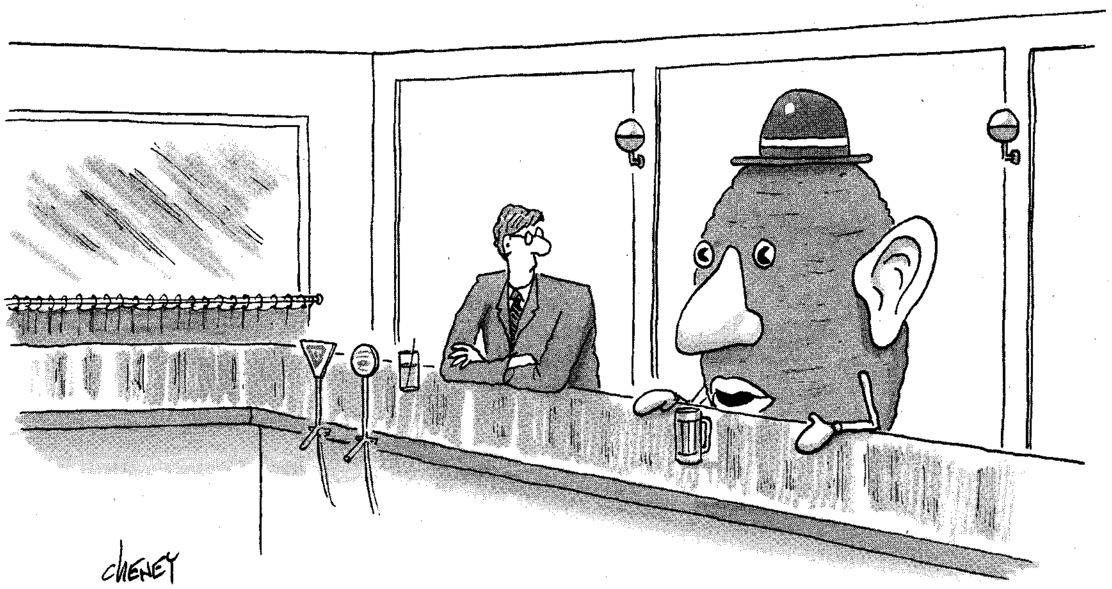
THE FINALISTS

"Why did you think angels had wings?"
Sonya Erickson, Denver, Colo.

"It's not the tedium. It's the uncertainty."
Hope Witte, Chevy Chase, Md.

"I always figured Hell would be less ironic."
Ben Snyder, Charlottesville, Va.

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST



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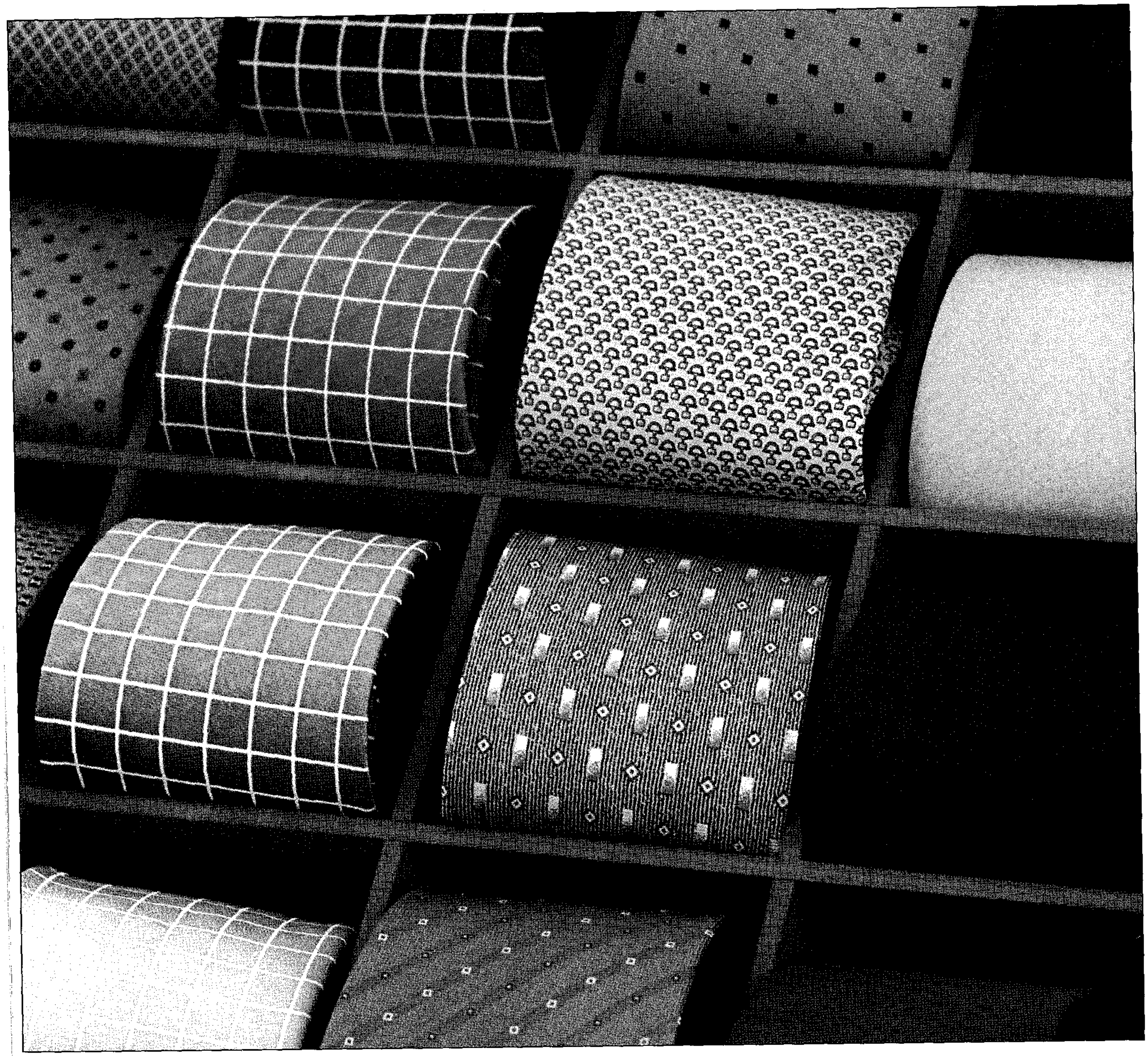

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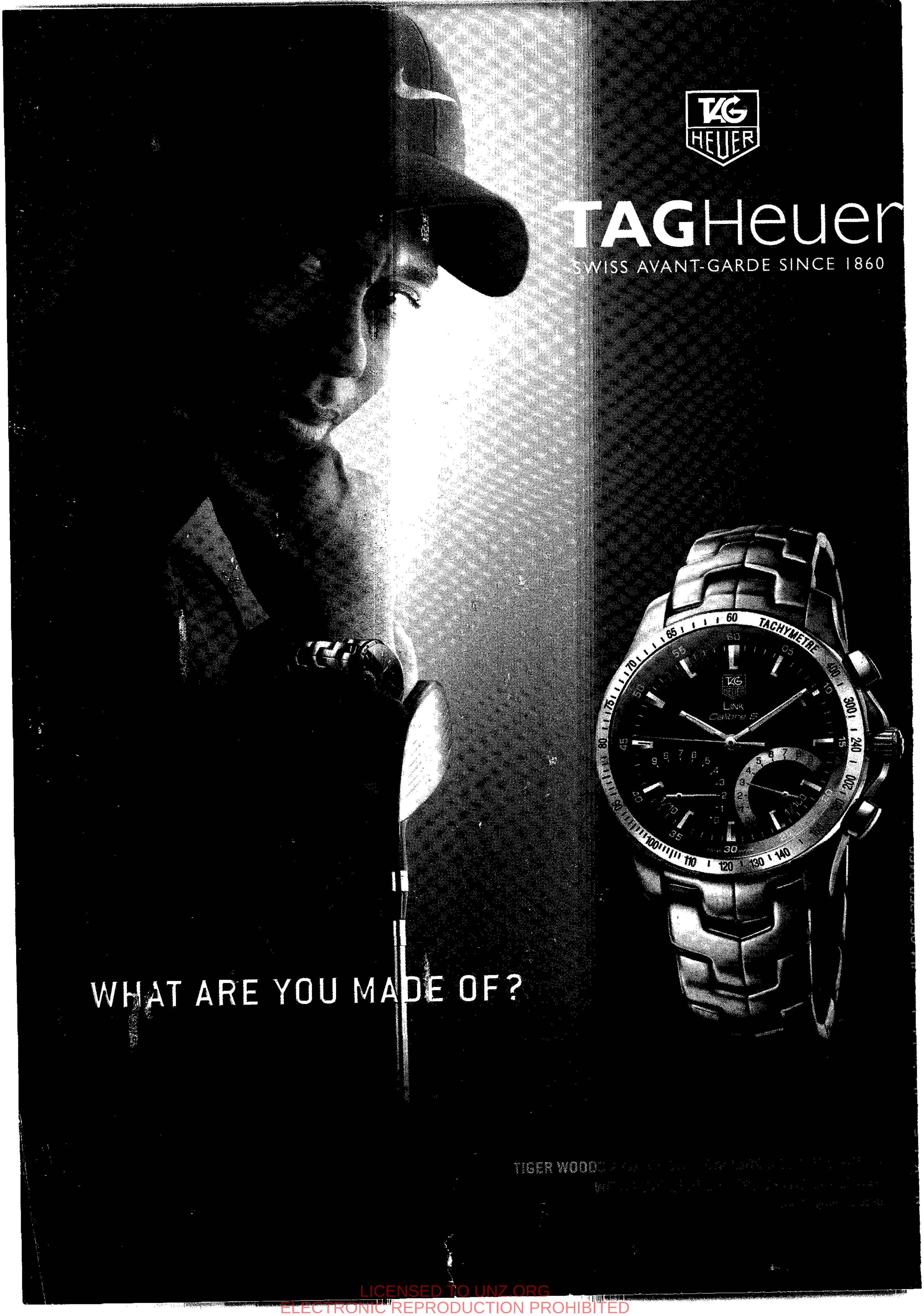
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